NATION

Protests break out after meat found at Agra mosque

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BUSINESS

US tariffs may shrink global trade by 3%: UN economist

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SPORTS

Bagan clinch ISL crown, defeat Bengaluru FC 2-1

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڵار روزنامەی بنگلور

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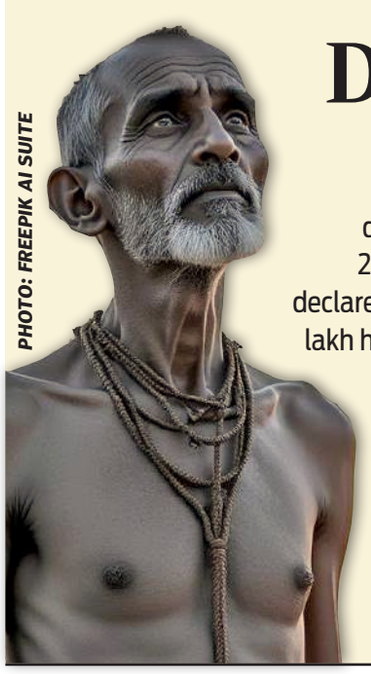

PHOTO: FREEPIK AI SUITE

Drought, debt drive 383 farmers to suicide in N K'taka

In 2023, the State experienced its worst drought in 123 years — 223 of 236 taluks were declared disaster-hit and 48 lakh hectares of crops were damaged. This resulted in a loss of

₹35,162 crore.

YOHAN P HONNADDI
BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

Karnataka's three districts - Bidar, Kalaburagi, and Yadgir - saw 383 farmer suicides in the last five years, according to the Agricultural Department data. What is pushing the farmers to the brink? It's a lethal combination of severe drought, crop failure, falling crop prices, and overwhelming debt.

Kalaburagi, known as the "tur bowl of Karnataka", saw 151 farmer suicides since 2023. From April 2023 to March 2024, alone, it saw 88 suicides amid severe drought. The toll decreased to 63 in April 2024 to March 2025, but the situation remains dire. Of the total number of suicides, 108 are eligible for compensation in the district.

Farmers have criticised the government's lack of action. Ningappa Karadi, a farmer from Shahapur, told Salar News, "I grew 60-70 quintals of chilli on my 4-acre land. But the market price has fallen to just Rs 6,000- Rs 8,000 per quintal from Rs 15,000. I made a profit of Rs 4 lakh. I owe Rs 6 lakh in loans. Even if I pay it back, I'll still owe Rs 2 lakh. If the government doesn't ensure fair prices for our crops, suicides will only increase."

In 2024-25, Kalaburagi cultivated 6.22 lakh hectares of tur dal, surpassing the target by 2 per cent. However, nearly 2 lakh hectares faced crop failure due to dry spells and dry root rot disease. Other crops such as bajra, sugarcane, groundnut, and cotton also suffered extensive damage, with 1.82 lakh hectares of crop loss.

"Farmers, who primarily cultivate crops such as pigeon pea, green gram, black gram, sorghum, cotton, and groundnut, are struggling as they often take loans for seeds, fertilisers, and labour, but when crops fail, the accumulated interest on loans becomes unmanageable. Despite government schemes aimed at supporting agriculture, these measures have failed to prevent farmer suicides," a farmer leader said on the condition of anonymity. Yadgir, too, has been severely hit, with 100 suicides in the last two years. In 2023-24, 70 farmers took their lives, followed by another 30 in 2024-25. The district was hit by drought and bouts of excessive rainfall, crippling agriculture. *—Salar News*

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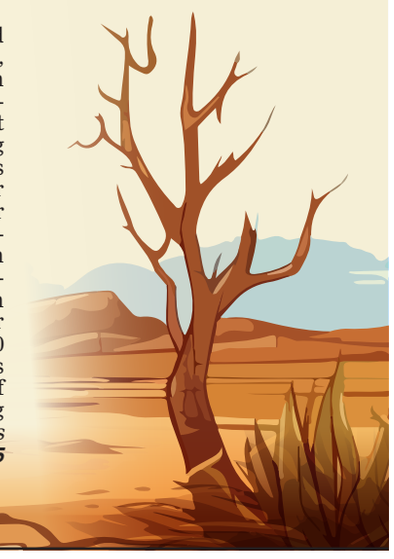
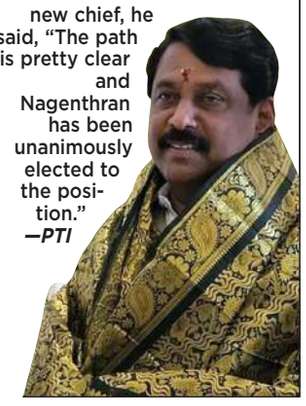


Nainar Nagenthran elected as TN BJP Chief

CHENNAI, 12 APRIL

BJP MLA Nainar Nagenthran was on Saturday elected as the president of the party's Tamil Nadu state unit. Outgoing chief, K Annamalai declared that the Nagenthran led state BJP in alliance with AIADMK, will take the necessary steps to oust the ruling DMK from the corridors of power. BJP leader and Union Minister G Kishan Reddy and party national general secretary Tarun Chugh declared Nagenthran duly elected as Tamil Nadu unit's president during a meeting here. Annamalai, in his address said that the goal is to dislodge the 'evil shakthi', the DMK from power in the 2026 Assembly elections Referring to the party joining forces with the AIADMK and Nagenthran all set to take over as state unit's new chief, he said, "The path is pretty clear and Nagenthran has been unanimously elected to the position." *—PTI*



3 dead as WB's Murshidabad sees violence over Waqf Act

Calcutta HC orders deployment of central forces in district

KOLKATA, 12 APRIL

Three people, including a father-son duo, were killed in West Bengal's Murshidabad following clashes allegedly linked to ongoing protests against the Waqf (Amendment) Act, an IPS officer said on Saturday.

So far, police have arrested 118 people in the violence that erupted during the protests against the Waqf (Amendment) Act.

Meanwhile, stating that it cannot keep its eyes closed when such situations come up, the Calcutta High Court ordered deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) in Murshidabad.

The court said citizens must be provided with adequate security and protection to ensure peace and order in the region.

The central forces will operate in coordination with the state administration.

The court also instructed both the state government and the Centre to submit detailed reports on the situation.

The father-son duo — Harogobindo Das and Chandan — were found with multiple stab wounds inside their home in Jafrabad, located in the violence-hit Samserganj area, he said.

Demonstraters set a bus ablaze during a protest against Waqf (Amendment) Act, in Murshidabad **PHOTO: PTI**

The third victim, 21-year-old Ijaz Momin, sustained bullet wounds during clashes at Sajur More in Suti on Friday.

"Both victims were discovered lying inside their home and were declared brought dead at a nearby hospital," the officer said.

Family members alleged that miscreants looted the house and fatally stabbed the two before fleeing.

In a separate incident, two workers of a local bidi factory sustained bullet injuries earlier in the day at Dhulian in Samserganj block.

Sources in the district administration said the victims — Gholam Moinuddin Sheikh and another boy — sustained gunshot wounds while on their way to work.

The officer said police conducted patrolling and route marches in and around the affected areas to maintain law and order.

On Friday, 18 policemen were injured during clashes in various parts of Murshidabad district, Additional Director General (Law and Order) Jawed Shamim said.

Police reportedly fired four rounds to bring the mob under control. Large-scale violence was reported from Suti and Samserganj areas during demonstrations over the controversial Act.

At least 18 police personnel, including an SDPO, were injured as a protest rally demanding the rollback of the Waqf (Amendment) Act turned violent in Tripura's Unakoti.

Eight protesters were arrested for their alleged involvement in the attack on police personnel. Around 4,000 people under the banner of 'Joint Movement Committee', headed by Congress' Unakoti district president Md Badruzzaman, took out a massive rally demanding the revocation of the Act. *—PTI*

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STATE VS GUV

In a 1st, SC sets deadline for Prez to pass bills

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court of India has mandated that the President must decide on bills reserved for the consideration by a governor within three months from receipt of the reference.

State governments can directly approach the Supreme Court if the President withholds assent on a bill sent by a governor for consideration, the top court has said in a landmark verdict on a plea of Tamil Nadu alleging delay in grant of consent to bills passed by assembly.

This ruling came shortly after the Court cleared ten bills previously stalled by Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi for presidential approval.

Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice R Mahadevan, in their comprehensive 415-page judgement, emphasised the need for timely action from both the President and governors regarding state legislation. The Court specified that any delay beyond the three-month period must be accompanied by documented reasons communicated to the concerned state. It stated that states should also cooperate by promptly responding to any queries and considering suggestions from the central government.

The ruling clarifies that if a governor withholds assent contrary to the advice of the Council of Ministers, the bill must be returned with a message within three months. Additionally, re-presented bills must receive assent forthwith, or within a maximum of one month.

Addressing the governor's role, the bench asserted that an "absolute veto" – where a governor could indefinitely delay a bill – is not permissible. It highlighted the necessity for governors to act on bills without undue delay, ensuring the smooth function of the law-making process in states. This decision not only underscores the constitutional obligations of the governors but also enhances the accountability of the President in the legislative process. *—PTI*

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Georgia introduces bill against Hinduphobia

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Georgia has become the first US state to introduce a Bill that formally recognises Hinduphobia and anti-Hindu bigotry, building on a 2023 resolution condemning such prejudice. Senate Bill 375, introduced in April 2025, proposes an amendment to Georgia's penal code that would define Hinduphobia and instruct law enforcement agencies to address hate crimes against Hindus more effectively.

The bill is backed by a bipartisan group of lawmakers — Republican Senators Shawn Still and Clint Dixon, along with Democratic Senators Jason Esteves and Emanuel D Jones. If enacted, the legislation would require state and local agencies to consider Hinduphobia when applying anti-discrimination laws and prosecuting hate crimes.

SB 375 defines Hinduphobia as "a set of antagonistic, destructive, and derogatory attitudes and behaviours towards Hinduism." The bill also aims to ensure such acts are accurately documented and dealt with under existing laws.

This move follows Georgia's 2023 resolution which acknowledged Hinduism as one of the world's oldest religions, with over 1.2 billion followers. *—Agencies*

2 terrorists, Army JCO killed in J&K

KISHTWAR, 12 APRIL

In recent military operations in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district, two terrorists and an army JCO were killed on Saturday, bringing the total eliminated in the area to three over the past two days. The operations began on April 9 and targeted militants affiliated with the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad outfit, including a top commander, Saifullah. Security officials praised the tactical efficiency of their forces, which faced challenging weather conditions, successfully avoiding casualties on their side.

Meanwhile, in a separate incident along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Akhnoor sector, an army Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO), Subedar Kuldeep Chand, was killed while thwarting a terrorist infiltration attempt. The officer's valiant actions during a fierce encounter on the night of 11 April saved countless lives, as the terrorists reportedly retreated back into Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Both incidents underscore the ongoing challenges faced by security forces in maintaining stability in the region. Brigadier JBS Rathi emphasized their commitment to rooting out terrorism, while the DIG of Doda-Kishtwar stressed coordinated efforts and local support in the fight against militancy. As operations continue, the authorities remain vigilant against any further threats. *—PTI*

KARAGA FERVOUR

Devotees lit camphor on the streets surrounding Bengaluru's Dharmaraya Temple ahead of the annual Karaga festival. The grand procession is set to begin late Saturday night and will conclude in the early hours of Sunday morning

PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD

2ND SINCE FEBRUARY

WhatsApp crashes in a major global outage

BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

Popular instant messaging app WhatsApp was down for many users on Saturday, with majority of them facing trouble sending messages or uploading status.

While 81 per cent of users reported glitches while sending messages, 16 per cent faced difficulty in overall use of the app, app outage tracking platform Down Detector said. The Meta owned app received 597 complaints by 5.22pm on Saturday.

The app had reported a similar issue in February, with users across the globe experiencing difficulty in sending messages or making calls through the app. They were also unable to upload their status. According to Down Detector, 9000 complains were reported in a single day from across the world.

"Is it just me or your WhatsApp is down as well? I am trying to upload status and it's taking forever to do so," one user posted on X.

On the other hand, WhatsApp announced new upgraded features to enhance user experience in both Android and I Phone Operating System (iOS) platforms. Major improvements have been made to its group chats, calls, reactions, events and its growing Channels feature.

The new 'online' indicator in group conversations will now enable users to see who is currently active within the group. *—Agencies*

UPI FACES THIRD OUTAGE IN LESS THAN A FORTNIGHT

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Unified Payments Interface (UPI) users across the country experienced transaction failures on Saturday as the popular payment system was down due to a technical glitch.

This is the third time in less than a fortnight that UPI witnessed outages impacting transactions. In the recent past, UPI outage was reported on 26 March and 2 April.

According to outage tracking platform Downdetector, a platform that monitors service disruptions based on user reports, complaints about UPI failures were being received after 11.30am. *—PTI*

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Communities concerned over caste report

Communities such as Lingayats have opposed it and sought a fresh exercise

the caste census report is set to be discussed at the special Cabinet meeting to be chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on 17 April **PHOTO: PTI**

BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

While the caste census report is set to be discussed at the special Cabinet meeting to be chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on 17 April, several communities have expressed their reservations, a number of others have opposed it and sought a fresh exercise.

Karnataka Rajya Vokkaliga Sangha President B Kenchappa Gowda told reporters that the survey report is faulty.

"This survey report has no basis. It's faulty. It has been done based on the 2011 census, which is meaningless. Further, no one from our community ever saw enumerators but yet the caste census was conducted, which itself raises doubt," Gowda, who belongs to the Vokkaliga community, said.

- Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil told reporters after the cabinet meeting that the caste census report has been submitted and there will be a detailed discussion on it in the 'special cabinet meeting' on 17 April.

Jagadika Lingayat Mahasabha Principal General Secretary SM Jamdar, who is a retired IAS officer, said the caste census was illegal and defective.

Jamdar explained that when an entire population is surveyed then it's called a census and when a small part of the population is covered then it's called a sample survey.

According to him, there was cheating by the people for the purpose of availing reservation for their children's education and employment during the survey.

He said people included their castes in the backward communities to avail reservation benefits.

Lingayats are another major community in Karnataka who hold sway in the State.

Basavaprabhu Swamiji, who is in charge of the Murugha Matha in Chitradurga, said, "We will wait for the recommendations to come out in public to take a decision on this. We have to see whether it is favourable or against us. The Akhila Bharata Veerashaiva Mahasabha will take a final call on it."

The contentious Socio-Economic and Educational Survey, caste census in short, was submitted before the state cabinet on Friday.

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil told reporters after the cabinet meeting that the caste census report has been submitted and there will be a detailed discussion on it in the 'special cabinet meeting' on 17 April. *—PTI*

Sex racket targeting girls busted in Mysuru

MYSURU, 12 APRIL

Mysuru police have busted a sex racket that was coercing college-going girls into the flesh trade. The case came to light after the parents of a student from a college under the NR Police limits filed a complaint. Police arrested Naveen and Manasa, both residents of Mysuru, for their involvement in the racket. Manasa, who had recently returned from Dubai, had settled in Mysuru and began befriending college girls. She allegedly lured them into the trade with promises of money, expensive gifts, and a luxurious lifestyle. Following their arrest, both were remanded to judicial custody. *—Salar News*

2 Mandya cops fired for forging CM's signature

MANDYA, 12 APRIL

Mandya Superintendent of Police Mallikarjuna Baladandi has suspended two police constables—Chikkaiah of Mandya Rural Police Station and Lokesh of Central Police Station—for their alleged involvement in a cheating case. The duo, in collusion with prime accused Venkatesh, reportedly collected lakhs from youths, falsely promising government jobs. Venkatesh, currently in jail, is accused of forging signatures of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and other officials. The constables were found to be in regular contact with him. Following an internal report, the SP ordered their suspension. Police have intensified investigations, suspecting more individuals may be linked to the scam. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: X

Mysuru Zoo to remain open on Monday, Tuesday

MYSURU, 12 APRIL

Chamarajendra Zoological Gardens, popularly known as Mysuru Zoo, along with Karanji Lake Nature Park, will remain open to the public on Monday and Tuesday, 14 and 15 April. A release from the Zoo's Executive Director stated the decision was made in view of BR Ambedkar Jayanthi, Sowramana Ugadi on 14 April, and the ongoing summer holidays for educational institutions across Karnataka. The zoo, which usually remains closed one day a week for maintenance, will instead stay open on both days to accommodate the holiday crowd and tourists. *—Salar News*

JD(S) MLA accuses CM of 'luring' Oppn MLAs

BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

JD(S) MLA MT Krishnappa on Saturday accused Chief Minister Siddaramaiah of "luring" opposition legislators to join the Congress party.

"If I ask for a polytechnic college for my constituency, Siddaramaiah tells me to join the Congress party. Is it right for a Chief Minister to behave like this?" he alleged.

The Turuvekere MLA made the allegation while participating in a massive protest held by JD(S) against the Congress government here over recent price hikes and alleged corruption.

"It's been two years since we became MLAs, but not even Rs 50 crore has been granted for the development of our constituencies. They don't even allocate funds to fill potholes. All they do is loot, nothing else. This is a poverty-stricken government. Those who can't even fix potholes hand out Rs 2,000," he alleged.

Krishnappa further claimed that even if it takes another 20 years, he will still stay with JD(S).

"When we ask for a polytechnic college, they say 'join the Congress.' Why Congress? It's a sinking party. Even if it takes another twenty years, I will stay with JD(S)," he alleged. *—PTI*

- "It's been two years since we became MLAs, but not even Rs 50 crore has been granted for the development of our constituencies. They don't even allocate funds to fill potholes. All they do is loot, nothing else. This is a poverty-stricken government."

JD(S) workers protested at City's Freedom Park on Saturday against the government, condemning the hike in power tariff, milk prices and essential commodities **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

JD(S) protests against Congress

BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

The Halasuru Police have registered an FIR against JD(S) workers for launching a poster campaign across City targeting the Congress-led State government over alleged corruption and price rise. Titled "Saakappa Saaku Congress Sarkara" (Enough of Congress government), the campaign began on 9 April without official permission.

Posters bearing QR codes were pasted on public property including bus stops, BMTC and KSRTC buses, and locations such as Maharani College bus stand and KR Circle. Scanning the QR codes redirected viewers to older video clips of Congress leaders criticising inflation—an attempt by JD(S) to expose the ruling party's alleged double standards.

Ironically, the campaign mirrors the Congress's earlier "PayCM" posters that criticised the BJP government, now repurposed by JD(S) to attack the Congress.

The party followed up with a protest at Freedom Park on Saturday, led by Nikhil Kumaraswamy, president of the JD(S) youth wing. The protest highlighted rising living costs and accused the government of burdening people despite announcing five welfare schemes—Gruha Lakshmi, Shakti, Gruha Jyoti, Anna Bhagya and Yuva Nidhi.

"What the government gives with one hand, it takes back with the other through relentless price hikes," the leaders alleged in a statement.

Following the rally, JD(S) workers, including Nikhil Kumaraswamy and several MLAs, attempted to march towards the Vidhana Soudha in protest. However, police detained them before they could reach the premises. All were later released. *—PTI*

Bommai urges SIT probe against Congress

BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

Basavaraj Bommai **PHOTO: PTI**

Former chief minister and BJP leader Basavaraj Bommai on Saturday demanded that the newly announced Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe include allegations of 60 per cent commission against the current Congress-led government, alongside the existing inquiry into the BJP's tenure.

His remarks follow the Cabinet's decision to form an SIT based on the Justice Nagmohan Das Commission's report, which investigated claims of a 40 per cent commission in civil works during the previous BJP regime. The one-man panel, headed by retired High Court judge Nagmohan Das, submitted a 20,000-page report last month.

Bommai accused the Congress government of covering up its own alleged corruption and called for the SIT to also examine charges made by contractor associations, including those in public works, excise, and electricity, who have claimed rampant 60 per cent commission under the current government.

He further demanded that the findings of the earlier commission on the 40 per cent allegations be made public, questioning why the government has withheld it.

- His remarks follow the Cabinet's decision to form an SIT based on the Justice Nagmohan Das Commission's report, which investigated claims of a 40 per cent commission in civil works during the previous BJP regime

On payments for completed works, Bommai claimed the Congress government lacks funds, which is discouraging contractors from taking up new projects.

He also criticised the handling of the caste census, alleging it was disguised as a socio-economic survey and lacked transparency.

He said the Backward Classes Commission report was not signed by key members and accused the government of political manoeuvring instead of genuine concern for backward communities. He concluded by questioning Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's commitment to social justice. *—PTI*

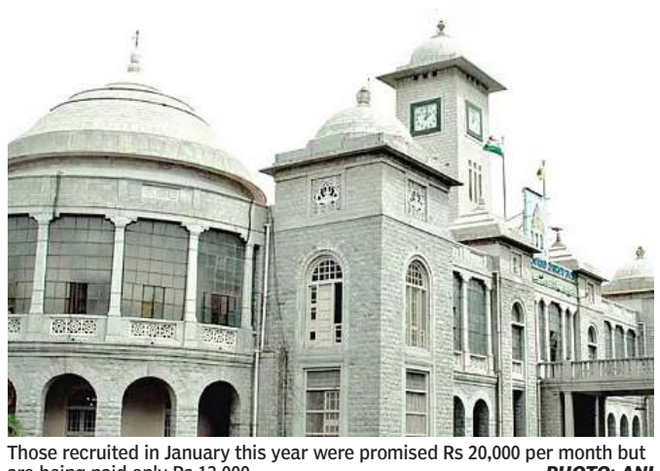
GOWDA TAKES GOVT BUS

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda chose a government Kalyan Rath sleeper coach bus over a private plane to reach Vijaypura for an official visit on Saturday. Travelling overnight from Bengaluru with a few department officials, he arrived at the central bus stand around 8am. **PHOTO: SALAR**

'HOW WILL WE SURVIVE?'

Unpaid for months, over 30 BBMP lake marshals resign

BENGALURU, 12 APRIL



Those recruited in January this year were promised Rs 20,000 per month but are being paid only Rs 13,000 **PHOTO: ANI**

Frustrated over months of unpaid wages, more than 30 lake marshals deployed at the City's Bellandur and Varthur lakes have tendered their resignations en masse, abandoning their posts.

The move has raised serious concerns over lake security and waste management in two of the City's most ecologically sensitive zones.

The marshals, tasked with protecting the lakes round the clock in two shifts, had reportedly not been paid for the past three to four months by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). Each lake was assigned 25 marshals, but with over half now stepping down, on-ground monitoring has come to a near standstill.

The National Green Tribunal (NGT), citing negligence, had previously imposed heavy fines on the state and handed over rejuvenation responsibilities to the BDA, while BBMP was entrusted with security measures including the installation of CCTV cameras and deployment of marshals.

Speaking to Salar on Saturday, local residents voiced concern over the vacuum left by the resignations. "Encroachments are increasing and garbage dumping near the lake is rampant. The situation will get worse in the absence of marshals," said Jagadeesh Reddy, a resident near Varthur Lake.

According to a resigned marshal, those recruited in January this year—many with NCC backgrounds—were promised Rs 20,000 per month but are being paid only Rs 13,000. "How can we run a family on that, especially with delayed payments?" he said.

A BBMP official, on the condition of anonymity, admitted the delay stemmed from a departmental shift in payment responsibility causing disruption in disbursement. *—Salar News*

Light rains to continue in the City until Sunday

BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

The City may continue to experience light to moderate rains until 13 April, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicting thundershowers till 13 April. Winds may gust at 40–50 km/h, and temperatures will range between 33 degrees Celsius during the day and 22 degrees Celsius at night. Skies are expected to remain partly cloudy, with intermittent showers offering momentary relief.

According to IMD, moderate rain and thunderstorms are likely on Saturday in parts of Shivamogga, Chikka magaluru, Hassan, and Kodagu. Coastal districts may witness isolated rain with thunder and gusty winds. In southern interior districts like Ballari, Bengaluru Rural, Mandya, Kolar, Tumakuru and others, patchy rainfall is forecast. Meanwhile, most northern and interior districts may remain largely dry barring brief showers in isolated locations.

Friday's weather saw varied conditions across State. While coastal towns like Mangaluru stayed around 33–34 degrees Celsius, northern districts such as Bidar, Kalaburagi, and Raichur sizzled at 37–39 degrees Celsius. *– Salar News*

Rapid changes in families impacts law, society: SC Judge

BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

Supreme Court Justice BV Nagarathna has remarked on the significant transformations facing the family institution in India, noting that these changes are reshaping both familial structures and the legal system. Speaking at the Southern Zone Regional Conference on "Family: The Basis of Indian Society", she identified factors such as increased educational access, urbanisation, workforce mobility, and the economic independence of women as key drivers of this evolution.

Justice Abdul Quddhose with Justice BV Nagarathna **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Justice Nagarathna emphasised the family as a fundamental societal unit, serving as a link to the past and a bridge to the future. She praised the socio-economic advancement of women through education and employment, highlighting their vital contributions to both family welfare and national progress.

To address the rising number of family disputes, which are overwhelming the courts, she proposed two essential steps: mutual understanding and self-awareness among partners, particularly in the context of marriage. By encouraging partners to consider each other's perspectives, she believes many disputes could be resolved before escalating to legal action.

Justice Nagarathna pointed to the alarming divorce rate, with nearly 40 percent. *—PTI*

Central Bengaluru to face power cuts today

BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

Several areas in the city will face a scheduled power outage on Sunday, 13 April, due to maintenance work being undertaken by the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM).

According to an official notification, the power supply will be disrupted between 11am and 3pm.

The affected localities include areas around Vidhana Soudha, Ganesh Temple RMU, Millers Road, Jaymahal, MK Street, Cunningham Road, Kemp Road, Benson Town, Spencer Road, SG Road, Chikka Bazar Road, Geneva House, Thimmaiah Road, Tasker Town, Muneshwara Nagar, and Shivajinagar, along with nearby areas.

Authorities have advised residents to plan their Sunday activities accordingly, as the temporary outage may cause inconvenience to households and commercial establishments.

BESCOM has assured that the scheduled maintenance is essential for ensuring a more reliable power supply in the future. Citizens are encouraged to follow official updates from the electricity department for any changes to the schedule or extended downtime. In case of emergency, the citizens are requested to contact BESCOM on the helpline number 1912. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: ANI

Sukhbir Badal re-elected SAD President

AMRITSAR, 12 APRIL

Sukhbir Singh Badal has been re-elected president of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) during the party's general delegate session held on Saturday at Teja Singh Samundari Hall in the Sri Darbar Sahib complex, Amritsar. His nomination was proposed by working president Balwinder Singh Bhundar and seconded by senior leader Paramjit Singh Sarna. Prominent figures including his wife, Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal, and leaders Bikram Singh Majithia and Daljit Singh Cheema were present. Badal resigned in November 2024 after being declared guilty of religious misconduct by the Akal Takht. The party is now for a conference on 13 April. *—PTI*

Three Naxalites shot dead in Chhattisgarh

BIJAPUR, 12 APRIL

Three Naxalites were shot dead during a gunfight with security forces on Saturday morning in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, police confirmed. The exchange occurred around 9am in the forested Indravati National Park, during a joint anti-Naxalite operation. Personnel from the District Reserve Guard (DRG) of Bijapur and Dantewada, Special Task Force (STF), and the 202nd and 210th battalions of CoBRA—an elite CRPF unit—took part. DRG is a unit of the state police. According to Bastar Range Inspector General Sundarraj P, the bodies of three Naxalites were recovered, along with arms and explosives. The operation is still underway. With this latest encounter, 138 Naxalites have been killed in Chhattisgarh this year, 122 of them in the Bastar division. *—PTI*

RSS naming row: Kerala Cong files police complaint

PALAKKAD, 12 APRIL

A political row intensified in Palakkad, Kerala, after the Congress lodged a police complaint against BJP district president Prasanth Sivan for allegedly threatening MLA Rahul Mamkootathil. The dispute arose over naming a skill development centre for disabled persons after RSS founder KB Hedgewar. Congress, Youth Congress, and DYFI activists disrupted Friday's foundation ceremony, objecting to the naming. Sivan later said Mamkootathil would not be allowed to enter the district. In response, the MLA declared he would continue opposing the RSS despite threats. The BJP held a counter-protest in support of Hedgewar. Mamkootathil claimed no official proposal had been approved by the municipal council and warned of legal action against the naming decision. *—PTI*

Ramadoss asserts control of PMK, won't back down

HYDERABAD, 12 APRIL

S Ramadoss, founder and president of the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), asserted his decision to assume complete control of the party, despite calls from a senior functionary and some party members to reinstate his son, Anbumani Ramadoss, as party chief. GK Mani, a prominent PMK leader who has been associated with Ramadoss for nearly 45 years, expressed his surprise at the sudden leadership change. He emphasised the necessity for the party to unite ahead of the 2026 Assembly election. On 10 April, Ramadoss announced his intention to lead the party exclusively, demoting Anbumani to the role of working president. This move has been met with discontent from Anbumani, a former Union Minister, who aspired to assume greater responsibility within the party. *—PTI*

Bengal will not implement Waqf Act: Didi

Didi urges calm as protesters go on rampage; Suvendu blames jihadists, demands NIA probe

KOLKATA, 12 APRIL

The Waqf (Amendment) Act will not be implemented in West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Saturday amid violent protests in the state.

"Remember, we did not make the law over which many are agitated. The law was made by the Central government. So the answer you want should be sought from the central government," the CM said on X.

"We have made our position clear on this matter -- we do not support this law. This law will not be implemented in our state. So what is the riot about?" she asked.

So far, two have been killed and 118 have been arrested, according to police.

The Chief Minister urged people to maintain calm and not fall prey to provocation.

"My sincere appeal to people of all religions, please remain calm, remain restrained. Do not engage in any irreligious behaviour in the name of religion. Every human life is precious; do not incite riots for the sake of politics. Those who are inciting riots are harming society," she said.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said the Centre enacted the law and that protesters should seek answers from them *PHOTO: ANI*

"We do not condone any violent activity. Some political parties are trying to misuse religion for political gain. Do not give in to their persuasions," she said.

Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari, meanwhile, wrote to Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, demanding a probe by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) into the vandalism of railway property in the district.

"I humbly request that the investigation into these acts of vandalism be handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA)," Adhikari said in a letter to the Railway minister. "Such a step would help uncover the true faces of the masterminds conspiring from behind the scenes."

> **We suspect that a major fundamentalist terrorist group may be instigating this**
>
> -Sukanta Majumdar
> West Bengal BJP President

> **They (BJP) have been busy stoking fires of communalism. This is the classic playbook of BJP-RSS. And then they deploy their lapdog media to portray state governments as villains**
>
> -Derek O'Brien,
> TMC MP

"Let it be known that this was not an act of protest, rather a premeditated act of violence, an assault on democracy and governance by Jihadist forces who seek to spread chaos in order to assert their dominance and sow fear amongst other communities of our society," he wrote on X. *—PTI*

Train services disrupted for over 7 hrs as agitators sit on tracks

Kolkata, 12 April

Train services were disrupted in the New Farakka-Azimganj section of Eastern Railway for over seven hours on Friday owing to obstruction and vandalism by a group of people between Dhuliandanga and Nimtita stations in West Bengal, an official said. Four express trains were diverted through different routes and two other passenger trains were cancelled owing to the blockade due to non-railway causes that started at 2.46pm and was withdrawn at about 20.30pm, the Eastern Railway official said. "About 5,000 people sat on the railway tracks" at a level crossing gate, while another level crossing gate was damaged by the agitators between Dhulian Ganga and Nimtita stations, he said.

—PTI

'WORK IN TANDEM'

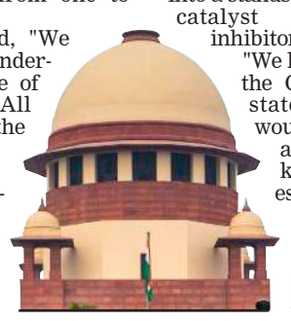
Not undermining Guv's office: SC

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

The Supreme Court said it is not undermining the office of the governor in fixing a timeline for their actions under Article 200 but they must act with due deference to the settled conventions of parliamentary democracy.

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan which was critical of Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi's sitting over bills passed by the legislative assembly, held that governors act according to Article 200 of the Constitution in a time-bound manner in a period ranging from one to three months.

The bench said, "We are in no way undermining the office of the Governor. All we say is that the Governor must act with due deference to the settled conventions of parliamentary democracy; respecting the will of the people being expressed through the legislature as-well as the elected government responsible to the people. He must perform his role of a friend, philosopher and guide with dispassion, guided not by considerations of political expediency but by the sanctity of the constitutional oath."



The bench, in its 415-page long verdict which was pronounced on 8 April but uploaded on Friday night the governor must be the "harbinger of consensus and resolution, lubricating the functioning of the State machinery by his sagacity, wisdom and not run it into a standstill. He must be the catalyst and not an inhibitor."

"We hope and trust that the Governor and the state government would work in tandem and harmoniously keeping the interests and well-being of the people as their paramount consideration," it added. *—PTI*

Aurangzeb was defeated in M'rashtra: Shah

RAIGAD, 12 APRIL

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday praised the valour of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, emphasising that Aurangzeb, who fought against the Marathas throughout his life, was buried in Maharashtra.

Shah paid tributes to Shivaji Maharaj at Raigad Fort on his 345th death anniversary.

He said Shivaji Maharaj's ideals of "swadharm and swarajya" continue to inspire India's ambition to become a superpower by the 100th year of independence.

"Aurangzeb, who called himself Alamgir fought Marathas and died a defeated man in Maharashtra. His tomb is located on its soil," Shah said.

Maharashtra had witnessed a huge political row over the demand by right-wing organisations to remove the tomb of the 17th Century Mughal emperor in Khultabad in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district.

Shah described Raigad Fort, which served as the Maratha kingdom's capital and houses Shivaji Maharaj's samadhi, as a great source of inspiration.

Amit Shah *PHOTO: ANI*

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis reiterated his government's commitment to constructing Shivaji Maharaj's memorial in the Arabian Sea. A petition for the same has been referred back to the Bombay High Court.

Fadnavis also accepted Satara MP Udayanraje Bhosle's demand for a national memorial of Shivaji Maharaj in Delhi.

Bhosle, a descendent of the Maratha ruler, also demanded a law making insults to the ruler a cognisable and non-bailable offence. *—PTI*

National Herald: ED to seize ₹700cr assets linked to Sonia, RaGa

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday served notices to take possession of immovable assets worth Rs 661 crore in a money laundering case linked to Congress-controlled National Herald newspaper and the Associated Journals Limited (AJL).

The probe agency on 11 April served the notices to the respective registrar of properties located in Delhi, Mumbai and Lucknow.

The action has been taken under Section (8) and Rule 5(1) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

These immovable assets worth Rs 661 crore along with AJL's shares worth Rs 90.2 crore were attached by the ED in November 2023 to "secure the proceeds of crime, amounting to Rs 988 crore and prevent the accused from dissipating the same."

The Congress had termed the investigation "petty vendetta tactics.

The ED investigation began in 2021 after the metropolitan magistrate at Delhi's Patiala House took cognisance of a private complaint filed by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy in 2014.

The ED claimed that Young Indian, a private company owned by Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, acquired AJL properties worth Rs 2,000 crore for a Rs 50 lakh. *—PTI*

EVMs 'safe' and 'tamper-proof' says CEC Kumar

RAMGARH, 12 APRIL

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar on Saturday said the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are "safe" and "tamper-proof". He said that EVMs used in India cannot be connected to internet, bluetooth or infrared and it is not possible anyway to tamper with it.

"Legal scrutiny has been done on EVMs. The EVMs used in India can neither be connected to internet nor bluetooth nor infrared. The EVMs cannot be connected to anything in any way. Therefore, it is not possible to tamper with it. So, India's EVMs are tamper-proof," Kumar on a three-day visit to Jharkhand said addressing media persons in Jharkhand's Ramgarh district.

He said over five crore VVPAT slips have been counted and no discrepancies have been reported so far.

"I interacted with returning officers and volunteers here. After meeting them, I felt that there is a strong foundation of democracy in Jharkhand," he said.

Kumar added no appeal (related to EPIC cards) is pending, which means the voter list in Jharkhand is close to 100 per cent satisfactory for voters and others. *—PTI*

'Alliance of defeat': Stalin slams AIADMK-BJP tie-up

CHENNAI, 12 APRIL

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Saturday said "hunger for power" is the reason for the alliance between the AIADMK and BJP and termed the tie-up an "alliance of defeat".

Reacting to the announcement of an alliance between the state's main opposition party and the national party that helms the Centre, Stalin called the AIADMK an 'old bonded slave camp' and questioned the ideological foundation of the alliance.

"AIADMK claims to oppose NEET, the imposition of Hindi, the three-language policy, the Waqf Act and the reduction of Tamil Nadu's representation during delimitation. Are all these part of the Common Minimum Programme?" he asked.

MK STALIN *PHOTO: PTI*

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, however, did not speak about any of these. Nor did he allow the AIADMK leadership to speak. Instead, Stalin said Shah used the press conference only to criticise his party, the DMK and him.

Stalin added, "The AIADMK-BJP alliance is doomed to fail. It was the people of Tamil Nadu who handed repeated defeats to this coalition. Now, Shah has reconstituted the same failed alliance." Stalin condemned Shah for "irresponsibly claiming that law and order has deteriorated in Tamil Nadu."

"This is not Manipur . The BJP ruled over a state where more than 250 people were killed in the past 18 months. The Union Home Minister who failed to restore peace there now seeks to disturb peace in a peaceful state like Tamil Nadu," he said. *—PTI*

Annamalai will be in national framework: BJP leader Soundararajan

Chennai, 12 April

As the AIADMK joins NDA, BJP leader Tamilisai Soundararajan on Saturday said outgoing BJP President K Annamalai would be inducted in the national framework. "(Union Home Minister) Amit Shah has said that he will be in the national framework. We are all very happy that all the talented heads are coming together to challenge the present DMK government. We are on the victorious path. Our organisation's election has been completed. " the BJP leader told ANI. *-ANI*

WILL IMPLEMENT IMEEC

India, Italy to boost energy, defence ties

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

India and Italy have decided to expand cooperation in areas of trade, defence, clean energy and high technology while vowing to work jointly in implementing the ambitious India-Middle-East-Europe-Economic Corridor (IMEEC).

Deepening India-Italy cooperation under the framework of Joint Strategic Action Plan (JSAP) 2025-29 figured prominently during talks between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Italian Deputy Prime Minister Antonio Tajani last evening.

Tajani, also the minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation, is on a two-day visit to India from Friday.

In the delegation level talks, Jaishankar and Tajani reviewed the growing bilateral cooperation under the ambit of JSAP which included the areas of trade and investment, defence and security, space, science and technology, clean energy transition and people-to-people ties, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Saturday.

Italy's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in New Delhi on Saturday *PHOTO: X*

Jaishankar and Tajani reiterated their commitment to elevating the bilateral strategic partnership and ensuring concrete outcomes from the JSAP and take forward the IMEEC.

Billed as a pathbreaking initiative, the IMEEC envisages a vast road, railroad and shipping networks among Saudi Arabia, India, the United States and Europe with an aim to ensure integration among Asia, Middle East and West.

The IMEEC initiative was firmed up on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Delhi. An agreement was signed by India, Saudi Arabia, the European Union, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the US and some other G20 partners for the corridor. On the other hand, the JSAP was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Italian PM Giorgia Meloni following their last November meeting at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

- The IMEEC envisages a vast road, railroad and shipping networks among Saudi Arabia, India, the US and Europe to integrate the three places

Jaishankar, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Tajani also co-chaired the inaugural India-Italy Business, Science and Tech Forum which seeks to facilitate tech collaborations, innovation, academic and R&D partnerships, co-production and joint business ventures.

India's Ministry of Science and Technology and Italy's Ministry of University and Research also signed an MoU for cooperation in the field of scientific research. *—PTI*

'Raised ₹10K cr using 400 acres as collateral'

CHENNAI, 12 APRIL

The Telangana Industries Minister, D Sridhar Babu announced that Industrial Infrastructure Corporation has raised nearly Rs 10,000 crore through the private placement of senior secured taxable redeemable, non-convertible debentures, utilising 400 acres of land adjacent to the University of Hyderabad as "pre-collateral".

Speaking at a press conference, Babu noted that the bonds, which carry a coupon rate of 9.35 per cent, have been rated and listed on exchanges, with Rs 8,476 crore now deposited in the Telangana Government Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIIC) account.

He claimed that the proceeds will fund welfare schemes, including farm loan waivers (Rs 2,146 crore) and support for fine rice cultivation (Rs 947 crore).

Babu refuted allegations from BRS Working President KT Rama Rao, asserting that ICICI Bank did not grant any loans to the government but simply managed an escrow account for the bonds. Babu said that the land is not under litigation and belongs to the state government.

D Sridhar Babu *PHOTO: X*

"The Supreme Court has given a judgement on it. The 400 acres land belongs to the state government," Babu said.

Meanwhile, BRS and BJP have raised concerns about the government's plans to develop the land, citing potential ecological impacts and the other hand, the UoH students have stayed protest opposing the decision.

The matter is pending in both the Telangana High Court and the Supreme Court. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Telangana's 'Tree man', who planted 1cr saplings, dies

HYDERABAD, 12 APRIL

Daripalli Ramaiah, popularly known as the "Tree Man of Telangana", died aged 87 after suffering a heart attack at his home in Reddipalli, Khammam. A lifelong environmentalist, Ramaiah planted over one crore saplings across the state and was awarded the Padma Shri in 2017 for his exceptional contribution to environmental conservation. He was known for cycling around with pockets full of seeds and saplings, and even sold his own land to support afforestation. Tributes poured in from national leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Telangana CM A Revanth Reddy. Ramaiah's life is now part of Telangana's school curriculum, ensuring future generations remember the man who believed humanity's survival depends on protecting nature. *—PTI*

Delhi man arrested for bestiality

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Delhi Police have arrested a man named Naushad in the Kailash Nagar area of Shahdara for allegedly raping multiple stray dogs. The arrest followed a complaint by an animal welfare NGO, where Naushad had been working as a supplier. "A video of the man sexually assaulting a dog has also surfaced on social media, in the video man can also be seen beaten by people and asking him, how many dogs did he rape," read a statement from the Delhi Police. The video was shared by the animal activist's X handle. The NGO alleges he assaulted at least 12 to 13 female dogs. Police have confirmed that an investigation is underway. A case was registered under section 325 (mischief by killing or maiming an animal) of the BNS and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act at Gandhi Nagar Police Station, police said. *—PTI*

Aluminium plant explosion in Nagpur kills five

NAGPUR, 12 APRIL

The death toll from the explosion at an aluminium factory in Maharashtra's Nagpur district has risen to five, police confirmed on Saturday. Two critically injured workers, who had been admitted to Government Medical College and Hospital with severe burns, succumbed to their injuries early Saturday morning. The blast occurred around 7pm on Friday at MMP Aluminium Industries, located in the Umred MIDC area. Three workers were found dead at the site after the fire was brought under control. All the deceased were between 20 and 25 years old and were residents of Nagpur district. Five other injured workers are currently undergoing treatment. Authorities are investigating the cause of the explosion, and safety protocols at the facility are expected to come under scrutiny in the coming days. *—PTI*

Thirteen cows run over by train in Kerala

PALAKKAD, 12 APRIL

Thirteen cows were killed on Saturday after being struck by a speeding train near Meenkara Dam in Kerala's Palakkad district, police said. The animals, owned by local residents, were grazing near the railway tracks when they began to cross and were hit by a Palakkad-bound train coming from Chennai. All the cows died on the spot, with their carcasses scattered across the track and surrounding areas. Railway and police officials later cleared the remains to resume train services. Authorities are working to identify the owners and are conducting an inquiry into the circumstances of the incident. *—PTI*

Protests break out after meat found at Agra mosque

Police book 60 agitators; person who placed meat held

AGRA, 12 APRIL

Around 60 people were booked after protesting outside the Jama Masjid in Agara. The protestors demanded strict action against the man who placed animal flesh in the mosque premises.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) (City) Sonam Kumar said on Saturday, "A case has been registered against the man who placed the piece of meat inside the mosque. Additionally, those who created disturbance outside the Jama Masjid have been booked. Around 60 people have been named in the FIR for their involvement in the protest."

The incident occurred late Thursday night when a man, Nazruddin, allegedly placed a packet containing an animal head inside the historic Shahi Jama Masjid in the Mantola area. The matter came to light on Friday morning, triggering tension in the locality ahead of the weekly Friday prayers.

Police said CCTV footage showed the accused arriving at the mosque on a scooty and placing the packet inside the premises before leaving. A team of more than 100 police personnel were deployed for investigation and area security. The recovered meat was seized and sent for forensic examination, they said.

The scooty used in the crime was traced to a local meat shop. Interrogation of the shopkeeper led to the arrest of Nazruddin on Friday, police added

Additional Police Commissioner Sanjeev Tyagi said that action would be taken under the National Security Act (NSA). "We are looking into the intent behind the act and whether more people were involved," he added.

A group of people gathered outside the mosque, after Friday prayers, demanding capital punishment for the accused. The situation turned tense and police used mild force to disperse the crowd.

Security was subsequently heightened in and around the Jama Masjid, with intensified police patrolling to prevent any further disturbance in the area. *—PTI*

Security personnel deployed in Agra, on Saturday. The protests broke out after a man placed an animal head in the masjid premises PHOTO: PTI

Not informing reason for arrest is violation of Art 22(1): HC

PRAYAGRAJ, 12 APRIL

Informing the reason for arrest is a mandatory requirement under Article 22(1) of the Constitution and its violation is grounds to grant bail, the Allahabad High Court ruled.

In the significant verdict, the High Court set aside a 25 December remand order of a magistrate in Rampur, observing that the grounds of the arrest of the petitioner were not furnished to him.

The requirement of informing the grounds of arrest is a mandatory requirement of Article 22(1) of the Constitution, it said, adding that it is the duty of the magistrate to ascertain its compliance and that of other mandatory safeguards.

"When a violation of Article 22(1) is established, it is the duty of the court to forthwith order the release of the accused," a division bench comprising Justices Mahesh Chandra Tripathi and Prashant Kumar said.

"That will be a ground to grant bail even if statutory restrictions on the grant of bail exist," the bench added,

The information of the grounds of arrest must be provided to the arrested person in such a manner that sufficient knowledge of the basic facts constituting the grounds is imparted and communicated to the arrested person effectively in the language that they understand, the court said. —PTI

Allahabad High Court PHOTO: ANI

5.8 magnitude earthquake jolts J&K, no casualty

SRINAGAR, 12 APRIL

A moderate-intensity earthquake, measuring 5.8 on the Richter scale, struck Jammu and Kashmir at approximately 1 pm on Saturday, with its epicentre located in Pakistan, according to official sources. Tremors were reported across various regions of the Valley, although there have been no immediate reports of casualties or property damage. The earthquake occurred at a depth of 10 kilometres, with coordinates of 33.63 degrees North and 72.46 degrees East, the official statement said. *—PTI*

LANDMARK MOVE

The tax is set to start in 2028 PHOTO: PTI

India votes in favour of first global carbon tax on shipping

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

India and 62 other countries voted in favour of the world's first-ever global carbon tax imposed on the shipping industry by the United Nations' shipping agency.

The decision, taken at the International Maritime Organisation headquarters in London on Friday aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from ships and promote cleaner technologies. This is the first time a global carbon tax has been imposed on an entire industry.

Starting 2028, ships will either have to shift to lower-emission fuels or pay a fee.

The deal was supported by 63 countries, including India, China and Brazil, but opposed by oil-rich nations like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Russia and Venezuela. The US was notably absent throughout.

Under the mechanism, ships will be charged based on the intensity of their emissions. For example, vessels using conventional fuel in 2028 would pay USD 380 per tonne for the most polluting portion of their emissions and USD 100 per tonne for other emissions that exceed defined thresholds. The tax could generate up to USD 40 billion by 2030.

Although the basic framework has been agreed, key technical details, including how the revenue will be used and distributed, are yet to be finalised.

The policy is expected to be formally adopted in October 2025.

A group of more than 60 countries, largely from the Pacific, Caribbean, Africa and Central America, had pushed for a share of the revenues to be directed towards broader climate finance needs. These countries, many highly vulnerable to climate change, expressed disappointment at the final outcome.

Tuvalu, speaking on behalf of the Pacific Island nations, criticised the lack of transparency in the negotiations and said the current design fails to promote a real shift to cleaner fuels.

Vanuatu's Minister for Climate Change Ralph Regenvanu said countries like Saudi Arabia, the US and other fossil fuel producers had "blocked progress at every turn" and weakened the proposals. *—PTI*

Following the dust storms on Friday, the increase air traffic at IGA lead to the delay of several flights PHOTO: X

OVER 350 FLIGHTS DELAYED AT IGIA

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

More than 350 flights were delayed at the Delhi airport on Saturday due to traffic congestion.

Social media users shared pictures and videos of waiting passengers at the airport.

Operations at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) were disrupted on Friday evening due to adverse weather conditions and as a spillover impact, operations have also been hit on Saturday.

As per data available on flight tracking website Flightradar24.com, more than 350 flights have been delayed and the average delay for flight departures was over 40 minutes.

"Ongoing air traffic congestion in Delhi is causing flights to be held for takeoff and landing clearance. Due to the consequential impact, a few flights across the network are impacted too," IndiGo said in a post on X at 1332 hours.

Meanwhile, only three runways are operational at the airport now as one runway is closed for maintenance works.

The dust storm wreaked havoc at the IGA on Friday evening, with sources saying that over 50 flights were delayed and 25 diverted and seven cancelled as a result of the adverse weather conditions.

—PTI/ANI

29 abused children rescued from illegal hostel in Thane

THANE, 12 APRIL

At least 29 children were rescued from an unauthorised hostel run by an organisation in Maharashtra's Thane district following a complaint about abuse, an official said on Saturday.

The police on Friday rescued 20 girls and nine boys from Pasaydan Vikas Sanstha, a residential institution in Khadavli and registered a case against five persons under the Juvenile Justice Act 2015 and the Protection of Children

from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, a release by the district administration stated.

The Child Helpline received a complaint on Thursday that children were being beaten up and sexually abused in the institution.

A team from the District Women and Child Development office, along with the police, inspected the institution on Friday and found the allegations true after interacting with children, the release said.

A case has been registered against the institution's director, two of his family members and two others. *—PTI*

Rajasthan braces for searing heatwave

JAIPUR, 12 APRIL

Rajasthan faces potential heatwave conditions, with the meteorological department predicting temperatures soaring to 45-46 degrees Celsius in western regions from 14 to 16 April.

Areas such as Jodhpur, Bikaner, and the Shekhawati region are expected to endure severe heat, while isolated thunderstorms and rainfall are anticipated in parts of Jaipur, Bharatpur, Ajmer, and Kota this weekend.

A duststorm triggered chaos during a 'Katha' ceremony in Rajasthan's Churu, resulting in minor injuries to three individuals, including a man, a child, and a woman.

This event, reportedly attended by around 15,000 people, was held without necessary clearance from the district administration. Following the incident, which led to a stampede-like situation, the ceremony, led by Pandit Pradeep Mishra, was abruptly cancelled and the venue evacuated as a safety measure.

Authorities revealed that the organisers had failed to secure official permission or make requisite security arrangements, despite prior warnings from the district collector and superintendent of police.

Anil Kumar, Circle Officer of Ratangarh, stated that a loudspeaker pole had fallen onto an electricity line, risking lives in the process. Legal action against the organisers is underway. *—PTI*

Wayanad rehabilitation work commences

WAYANAD, 12 APRIL

Construction work of the township for the Wayanad landslides victims commenced early Saturday morning at the Elstone Estate near Kalpetta.

The work began a day after the Kerala High Court paved the way for the state government to take possession of the Elstone Estate land, meant for the project, after depositing an additional Rs 17.77 crore.

A Wayanad district administration official said that following the High Court order on Friday, the District Disaster Management Authority decided to deposit the amount and that concerned officials completed all the required formalities during the night and initiated construction works.

The state government had already deposited around Rs 26.56 crore in March.

However, as the companies which owned land not satisfied, the state government agreed to pay an additional Rs 17.77 crore.

The High Court also said the companies' claims for enhancement of the compensation can be examined later in the High Court, but for now the possession of the land was granted to the state government to ensure the rehabilitation project was not further delayed. *—PTI*

MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH

Scientists discover 6 new beetles in Northeast

KOLKATA, 12 APRIL

Researchers of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and Museum A Koenig in Germany have discovered six new beetle species in northeast India, an official statement said.

A study published in the journal 'Zootaxa' announced the discovery of six new species of Sericinae beetles from the biodiversity-rich regions of northeast India, it said.

The research team, comprising Devanshu Gupta, Debika Bhunia and Kailash Chandra from ZSI and Dirk Ahrens from the Museum A Koenig, meticulously examined beetle specimens housed in the Coleoptera Section of the Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata and Museum A Koenig, Germany.

"Their comprehensive analysis not only revealed these six previously unknown species belonging to the genera Maladera, Neoserica and Serica but also documented new regional records for 28 other species, significantly enhancing our understanding of the area's rich insect fauna," the statement said.

The newly identified beetle species are - Maladera champhaiensis, Neoserica churachandpurensis, Maladera barasingha, Maladera lumlaensis, Serica subansiriensis and Maladera onam.

ZSI Director Dhriti Banerjee said, "This research highlights the critical role of international cooperation in advancing scientific knowledge and conservation outcomes and the need for ongoing exploration and documentation of insect biodiversity, particularly in under-sampled regions." *—PTI*

The newly discovered *Maladera champhaiensis, Neoserica churachandpurensis, Maladera barasingha, Maladera lumlaensis* PHOTO: X

Minor girl raped and murdered in Manipur

IMPHAL/ CHURACHANDPUR, 12 APRIL

In a shocking incident, a mentally challenged minor girl was allegedly raped and murdered in Churachandpur district, Manipur. Officials reported that her body was discovered in a forest in the Thanlon sub-division on Friday.

The girl had ventured into the forest in the Leijangphai area to collect firewood, and when she failed to return, her father grew concerned and went looking for her. Tragically, her body was located that afternoon, with torn clothes and multiple injury marks.

Police have since apprehended a suspect. This incident marks the third case of sexual assault involving minor girls in Churachandpur in under a month. Earlier this month, a 10-year-old girl was sexually assaulted by a boy of the same age. Additionally, last month, the lifeless body of a 9-year-old girl was found near a relief camp for internally displaced individuals. She had injuries on her neck and bloodstains around her body. Her family, alongside civil society organisations including the Zomi Mothers' Association, alleged she was murdered following sexual assault. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

PHOTO: PTI

131 FARMERS DIE by suicide in Bidar since 2020

YOHAN P HONNADDI
BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

Bidar is witness to a large number of farmer suicides. The district saw 131 suicides since 2020. The year April 2023-March 2024 saw the highest toll in the district, with 75 farmers taking their own lives, mainly due to the drought that ravaged crops. Shockingly, 32 of these suicides were from Bhalki, the hardest-hit region as crops were destroyed after heavy unseasonal rains. As of April 2024 to 2025, Bhalki has already reported seven more suicides.

On 28 January, 2025, two farmers killed themselves in a single day. One of them was a 21-year-old from Khanapur village in Bhalki. He had taken a loan of Rs 4 lakh to invest in his crops. However, due to poor yield, he was unable to pay his debt. This inability to clear debts is the very reason why farmers kill themselves.

What adds salt to the wounds is the delay in the disbursement of compensation to the families of the deceased. However, the Department of Agriculture has dismissed these claims. Joint Agriculture Director Ziaullah Khan told Salar News, "Compensation has been distributed to all the families of farmers who died by suicide in 2023-24. Of the 21 cases reported in Bidar 2024-25, compensation has been given to 14 families."

Khan said families of farmers who die by suicide are entitled to a 5 lakh compensation, along with widow pensions, healthcare, education, and housing support.

PHOTOS: FREEPIK

Samad Patel, Joint Director of Agriculture, told Salar News that while suicides have decreased by 30 per cent from 88 in 2023 to 63 in 2024, the financial distress remains overwhelming. "The financial strain and debt burden continue to lead many farmers to take their own lives despite the government's efforts," Patel said.

To tide over the crisis, Kalaburagi District In-charge Minister Priyank Kharge announced a relief package of Rs 667.73 crore on 25 March for 2,36,933 farmers who suffered crop loss during the kharif season. He claimed it was the largest-ever relief package for the district.

In Yadgir, heavy rainfall and floods damaged crops on at least 4 lakh hectares in 2024. Yadgir, which received 736 mm of rainfall in 2024 (a 2 per cent surplus), saw losses, particularly in commercial crops such as paddy, cotton, and chilli. Despite these challenges, the Agriculture Department had set a target of 84,500 hectares for tur cultivation in 2024, leading to heavy financial strain.

Mallikarjun Satyampete, Vice President of the Karnataka State Farmers' Association, decried the lack of genuine political will to address farmers' concerns. "Before elections, all parties promise to help farmers, but once in power, they forget about us. Laws like the Swaminathan Commission Report must be implemented," he said, adding that despite the Minimum Support Price (MSP) guarantee, farmers are still struggling. The Swaminathan Commission recommends ways to improve the productivity and profitability of farmers and suggests ways to ensure food security and rural credit.

In 2024, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said the government would pay Rs 3,000 each to 16 lakh small and marginal farming families to compensate them for losses due to drought.

—*Salar News*

YEARLY DEATHS IN BIDAR

Year (April-March)	No of suicides
2020-21	10
2021-22	21
2022-23	4
2023-24	75
2024-25	21

TALUK-WISE BREAKDOWN OF SUICIDES IN YADGIR

During 2023–24, Yadgir reported 70 farmer suicides, distributed across its taluks as follows:

SHAHAPUR 21

VADAGERA 12

SURAPURA 20

HUNASAGI 15

YADGIR 1

GURUMITKAL 1

DESIGN: G. VISHWANATHA

WHAT IS DRY ROOT ROT DISEASE?

Dry root rot is a plant disease caused mainly by a fungus called Rhizoctonia bataticola. It affects the roots of crops like chickpea, cotton, and groundnut, especially in hot and dry conditions. The disease starts with the yellowing and wilting of leaves. As it progresses, the roots turn dark, brittle, and dry, making it hard for the plant to absorb water and nutrients. Eventually, the plant dries up and dies, even if the soil has enough moisture. Poor soil health and drought stress make the problem worse. Managing the disease involves crop rotation, using resistant varieties, and improving soil moisture and health.

"Before elections, all parties promise to help farmers, but once in power, they forget about us. Laws like the Swaminathan Commission Report must be implemented

Mallikarjun Satyampete, Vice President of the Karnataka State Farmers' Association

"I grew 60-70 quintals of chilli on my 4-acre land. But the market price has fallen to just Rs 6,000- Rs 8,000 per quintal from Rs 15,000. I made a profit of Rs 4 lakh. I owe Rs 6 lakh in loans. Even if I pay it back, I'll still owe Rs 2 lakh. If the government doesn't ensure fair prices for our crops, suicides will only increase

—Ningappa Karadi,
a farmer from Shahapur

PHOTO: X

Heatwaves, summer hit moong cultivation in MP

Madhya Pradesh's Narmadapuram district is facing the dual challenges posed by rising temperatures and the intensive summer moong cropping system.

On 7 April, the district recorded a scorching 44.3°C, finding a spot among the top five hottest places in India.

Just two days earlier, a man-made fire disaster in the district destroyed nearly 100 acres of standing wheat crop, highlighting the growing environmental risks tied to farming practices under extreme weather conditions.

Narmadapuram leads Madhya Pradesh in summer moong (green gram) cultivation, covering more than 3,50,000 hectares. With growing demand and the promise of quick returns, farmers are determined to grow summer moong at any cost.

Fuelling the fire

Due to rising temperatures, the practice of early wheat harvesting has become prevalent.

Farmers who manage to arrange harvesting machinery timely often burn wheat crop residues immedi-ately afterward — without considering the consequences of strong winds.

- In response, the district administration has initiated Kisan Khet Schools across villages to raise awareness about the dangers of residue burning and excessive pesticide use.

This risky practice is largely aimed at preparing the fields for the next crop.

According to a local farmer named Munna Lal Nagwanshi from Bankhedi village, burning residues has become a routine step to accelerate field preparation.

He also shared that farmers resort to using herbicides and chemicals like Paraquat to induce faster ripen-ing of the moong crop — posing serious health and environmental risks. In response, the district administration has initiated Kisan Khet Schools across villages to raise awareness about the dangers of residue burning and excessive pesticide use. Despite these efforts, harmful practic-es continue, contributing to air pollution, soil degradation, and the risk of unsafe food production — es-pecially concerning as moong is considered a staple in healthy diets prescribed by doctors.

On an average, summer moong yields around 14 quintals per hectare, but the pressure to improve re-turns is pushing some farmers toward unsustainable methods. Ironically, a crop known for its health benefits is increasingly being produced in ways that may make it unsafe for consumption. The ongoing heat, worsened by crop residue burning, further contributes to the district's soaring temper-atures. Munna Lal also expressed concern for marginal and small farmers, who are deeply worried about the impact of extreme heat in May and June — likely leading to water scarcity, livestock stress, biodiver-sity loss, and human suffering. In this context, it is critical for government bodies, communities, civil society, and markets to come together.

—*Down To Earth*

Scientists warn an imminent repeat of Himalayan Lake burst

A reconstruction of the 2023 Sikkim floods has revealed that decades of glacier retreat and permafrost thaw set the stage for catastrophe — and could trigger another disaster at any time.

On 3 October, as heavy rains pounded the northeastern Indian state, a massive chunk of frozen moraine — 14.7 million cubic meters of rock, ice, and debris — collapsed from the flanks of a retreating glacier into South Lhonak Lake. The impact unleashed a towering 20-meter wave, breaching the lake's natural dam and releasing nearly half its volume — 50 million cubic meters of water — downstream.

The resulting Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) proved far more destructive than models had predicted, scouring away roughly 270 million cubic meters of sediment, five times the volume of water released. The flood killed 55 people, displaced thousands, and battered the 1,200-megawatt Teesta-III hydropower dam.

"Current conditions would allow another event," said Dave Petley, an earth scientist at the University of Hull and co-author of the study. "The lake still holds a large volume of water, and the surrounding moraine remains unstable."

Petley is part of an international research team led by Ashim Sattar, a glaciologist at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bhubaneswar. Using high-resolution satellite imagery, seismic data, meteorological records, field observations, and numerical modeling, the scientists found that existing risk assessments, including Sattar's own 2016 model, had underestimated the flood's power, particularly the impact of debris-laden flows.

Glacial melt water flowing through snow in Himalaya.

PHOTO: Sharada Prasad CS/CC BY 2A

"The sheer volume of sediment carried downstream was unexpected," Sattar said. "It supercharged the flood."

Predicting GLOFs

As India moves to rebuild the Teesta-III dam, experts warn that stronger hazard assessments and early warning systems (EWS) are crucial.

"A rainfall-based warning system, like Hong Kong's, could help predict landslides using radar and rain gauges," said Petley. "Ground deformation monitoring could further enhance early warnings."

For an EWS to be truly effective, it must go beyond lake-level monitoring, said Rakesh Kumar Ranjan, a hydrologist at Sikkim University. In glacier-rich regions like Sikkim, real-time stream monitoring offers a cost-effective way to detect sudden surges. Any system, he stressed, must also include evacuation plans, response training, and public awareness.

Predicting a GLOF remains complex. "A lake can burst in many ways," said Sonam Wangchuk, a cryosphere specialist at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). Rising water volume can weaken a moraine wall, while earthquakes or heavy rain can trigger landslides, displacing water and causing an outburst. When these factors interact — as in Sikkim — prediction becomes even harder.

Floods are changing, and time to adapt is running out, as highlighted in a study2 of 1,015 floods in the high mountains of Asia. "A single monsoon cloudburst or glacial collapse can spark cascading disasters, overwhelming unprepared regions," Wangchuk warned.

South Lhonak: A ticking time bomb

South Lhonak Lake's rapid expansion over the past two decades made the disaster inevitable. First observed in the 1960s, its growth rate doubled since 2004, from 0.023 km² to 0.046 km² per year. Glacier retreat and thinning, driven by long-term climate warming, fueled this dramatic expansion, said Sattar.

Average annual temperatures in the region have risen by 0.08°C per decade since 1951. Record summer heat in 2020, 2022, and 2023 accelerated glacier mass loss, weakening the frozen moraine that once acted as a natural dam. "We found abundant permafrost around the lake and in the lateral moraine that collapsed," Sattar noted.

Beyond warming, internal glacial processes hastened the lake's growth. "Even with year-to-year climate variability, once a glacial lake forms, it can keep expanding independent of direct warming," he said. These underlying shifts turned the 3–4 October rainfall into a trigger, unleashing a chain reaction. Heavy rains saturated slopes, increasing landslide risk. Within 18 minutes of the moraine collapse, floodwaters tore through an Indo-Tibetan Border Police camp 7 km downstream. Two hours later, the flood reached the Teesta-III hydroelectric dam in Chungthang, 68 km away. Chunks of ice calving from the parent glacier into South Lhonak Lake accelerated its expansion beyond what warming alone could explain. "Even with year-to-year variations in temperature, the lake kept growing, showing that once a glacial lake forms, internal processes can drive continued expansion, not just due to climate," Sattar said.

—*The Nature*

PHOTO: FB

Singapore honours 4 Indians for rescuing children

SINGAPORE, 12 APRIL

The Singapore government has honoured four Indian migrant workers for rescuing 16 children and six adults from a fire at a shophouse here. Inderjit Singh, Subramanian Saranraj, NagarajanAnbarasan and SivasamiVijayaraj received the Friends of ACE coins from the Manpower Ministry's Assurance, Care and Engagement (Ace) Group, which safeguards the well-being of migrant work-ers in the city-state. Hearing the children scream and noticing thick smoke billowing out of the third floor shophouse window on April 8, the migrant workers grabbed a scaffold and a ladder to reach the children on the ledge of the building. Staff from inside placed the children one by one on the ledge just outside the window while the workers carried and passed them down a human chain to safety. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Winds, sandstorms prompt Beijing to cancel flights

BEIJING, 12 APRIL

High winds and the threat of sandstorms on Saturday prompted Beijing to cancel hundreds of flights and close public parks, as massive gales felled hundreds of trees, crushing cars and damaging older homes across the city, Beijing's two massive international airports cancelled 693 flights by 2.00pm with warnings of more violent weather, especially in northern China and along coastal areas. More flights and trains were cancelled in other parts of China. Some parts of the country recorded their most powerful winds in more than 75 years, registering a speed of 148 kph. In Beijing, the Universal Studios theme park, Forbidden City, Summer Palace and Temple of Heaven remained closed. Outdoor events have also been suspended. High winds and sandstorms are generated in China's dry north, where the Gobi and Taklamakan Deserts are located. —*PTI*

Iran, US begin talks over nuke programme in Oman

Trump has threatened airstrikes if a deal isn't reached

MUSCAT, 12 APRIL

Iran and the United States have begun negotiations in Oman over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear programme. Esmail Baghaei, a spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, made the announcement on the social platform.

"These talks will be a held at a location planned by the Omani hosts with represent-atives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States seated in separate rooms," Baghaei said.

No overall agreement is immediately likely, but the stakes of the negotiations couldn't be higher for these two nations closing in on half a century of enmity. Trump repeatedly has threatened to unleash airstrikes targeting Iran's nuclear pro-gramme if a deal isn't reached. Iranian officials increasingly warn that they could pursue a nuclear weapon with their stockpile of uranium enriched to near weapons-grade levels.

Flight-tracking data analysed by The Associated Press showed a private jet from Pulkovo Airport in St. Petersburg, Russia, arrived in Oman on Saturday morning. US Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff had just met Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday there.

Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Ministry released footage of Tehran's top diplomat, Ab-bas Araghchi, meeting with Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi. Agrahchi in an audio clip published by IRNA has said that the talks will be indirect and an agreement on the nuclear issue will be reached only on an equal footing. Trump and Witkoff both have described the talks as being "direct" and said the US would begin with seeking dismantlement of Iran's nuclear programme. —*PTI*

US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, left, and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. PHOTO: X

Trump says he's 'in good shape'. Is he really?

US President Donald Trump underwent an annual physical examination at Walter Reed National Military Medical Centre, declaring, "I did well," and praising his heart and cognitive abilities. The 78-year-old was subjected to various tests for nearly five hours, though detailed medical reports are expected to be released over the weekend. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt announced a compre-hensive report would follow.

Indian-origin leader accused of racketeering

Anand Shah, a 42-year-old councilman of Indian origin from Prospect Park, New Jersey, has been charged in connection with a racketeering and illegal gambling operation linked to the Lucchese crime family, reportedly profiting over USD 3 million. Shah, alongside 39 others, faces accusations of racketeering, money laundering, and various gambling offences following a two-year investigation. Law enforce-ment executed search warrants at 12 locations.

Gaza row: US to deport Columbia student

JENA, 12 APRIL

US Immigration Judge has ruled that Columbia University graduate student Mahmoud Khalil who participated in pro-palestinian demonstrations can be deport-ed as a national security risk. The government's contention that Khalil's presence in the United States posed "potentially serious foreign policy consequences" was enough to satisfy requirements for his deportation, Immigration Judge Jamee E Comans said at the conclusion of a hearing in Jena on Friday.

Khalil, a legal US resident, was detained by federal immigration agents on 8 March in the lobby of his university-owned apartment, the first arrest under President Donald Trump's promised crackdown on students who joined campus protests against the war in Gaza.

Within a day, he was flown across the country and taken to an immigration deten-tion centre in Jena, thousands of miles from his attorneys and wife, a US citizen who is due to give birth soon.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio had cited a rarely used statute to justify Khalil's deportation, which gives him power to deport those who pose "potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences for the United States".

Comans said the government had "established by clear and convincing evidence that he is removable". Lawyers for Khalil said they plan to keep fighting and will seek a waiver. And a federal judge in New Jersey has temporarily barred Khalil's deportation. —*PTI*

Mahmoud Kahlil PHOTO: X

BORDERS CLOSED IN EUROPE AMID FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE OUTBREAK

LEVÉL, 12 APRIL

Authorities in several countries of Central Europe are working to contain an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease among cattle populations, leading to border closures and culling of thousands of animals.

The outbreak was first detected on a cattle farm in northwestern Hungary last month. Animals on more farms in Hungary and neighbouring Slovakia have tested positive for the highly transmissible virus.

Foot-and-mouth disease primarily affects cloven-hooved animals like cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and deer, causing fevers and blisters in the mouth and hooves.

Authorities in Hungary continued operations to contain the disease by disinfecting affected farms and vehicles in the area. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

AS EU BACKS UKRAINE

Steve Witkoff met Vladimir Putin at the Presidential Library in St Petersburg PHOTO: X

Trump's envoy, Putin hold talks on Ukraine ceasefire

MOSCOW, 12 APRIL

United States President Donald Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Saint Petersburg to discuss the conflict in Ukraine, Al Jazeera reported.

On Friday, Putin was shown on state TV, as per Al Jazeera, greeting Witkoff in Saint Petersburg's presidential library at the start of the negotiations, and their talks lasted more than four hours.

The Kremlin said the meeting "focused on various aspects of the Ukrainian settle-ment", without elaborating. Earlier, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Putin and Witkoff might discuss the possibility of the Russian leader meeting Trump face-to-face.

According to Al Jazeera, Witkoff is now a key figure in the on-off tete-a-tete be-tween Moscow and Washington amid talk on the Russian side of potential joint in-vestments in the Arctic and Russian rare earth minerals.

The talks come as the US continues efforts to broker a ceasefire deal to end the conflict, which has stalled amid negotiations on the conditions of the deal.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt on Friday (local time) confirmed that US special envoy Steve Witkoff is currently in Russia to hold direct talks with the Kremlin and Russian President Vladimir Putin as part of the ongoing efforts to-wards a ceasefire deal for the Ukraine conflict.

During a press briefing, Leavitt stated that it was a step towards the negotiating process for the ceasefire as well as an "ultimate peace deal."

She added that US President Donald Trump has been "continually frustrated with both sides of this conflict," indicating the administration's intent to take a more active role in peace negotiations. —*ANI*

Hong Kong pro-democracy party to be disbanded

HONG KONG, 12 APRIL

Hong Kong's largest pro-democracy party, the Democratic Party, is being disband-ed, a reflection of the steady decline of civil liberties in the region. Yeung Sum, a co-founder, expressed sorrow over the decision, noting that Chinese officials sug-gested it was necessary to avoid severe repercussions.

The party, founded in 1994, once thrived, securing the most seats in the legislature and advocating robustly for democracy. However, Beijing's crackdown following the 2019 protests and the imposition of a national security law have silenced dis-sent, leading to a significant erosion of democratic processes. Many of the party's prominent members have been imprisoned, while other pro-democracy groups have also dissolved.

- The party's leadership will convene to vote on a motion enabling the process of dissolution, a move current chairperson stated was prompted by the prevailing political climate.

On Sunday, the party's leadership will convene to vote on a motion enabling the process of dissolution, a move current chairperson Lo Kin-hei stated was prompted by the prevailing political climate. This decision underscores the broader political repression in Hong Kong, following electoral changes that legally barred 'non pa-triots' from participation.

Party member Ramon Yuen lamented the loss of an influential voice in advocating social issues and democracy. Despite the impending dissolution, Yeung maintains that the spirit for democracy among Hong Kong's youth remains alive, albeit in a more subdued form.

As the party prepares for its likely end, Yeung warns that its disappearance will challenge external faith in the "one country, two systems" principle, yet he believes the desire for democracy in Hong Kong cannot be extinguished. —*PTI*

Hong Kong's biggest pro-democracy party moves to disband after Chinese officials and middlemen warned them of consequences if they don't do so, party veterans say. PHOTO: X

THE COLOSSAL MAGIC

Will Woolly Mammoth, Dodo & Tasmanian Tiger be resurrected?

US-based biotechnology and genetic engineering company Colossal Biosciences brought back dire wolves back from de-extinction after 10, 000 years. Next on the list are Woolly Mammoth, Dodo and Tasmanian Tiger.

HOW DID THEY BRING BACK THE DIRE WOLVES?

Colossal used gene editing to harvest ancient DNA from dire wolf fossils—a 13,000-year-old tooth and 72,000-year-old skull—to recreate dire wolf genomes. They birthed 3 pups in the lab by editing gray wolf DNA to express dire wolf traits, and using surrogate dogs. The dire wolves are named Romulus, Remus and Khaleesi.

WHICH EXTINCT ANIMALS ARE COMING BACK NEXT?

1. TASMANIAN TIGER

The Tasmanian Tiger, was a wolf-like carnivore with stripes on its lower back, which went extinct in 1936. Colossal sequenced a complete thylacine genome in 2017, and in 2023, researchers extracted RNA from a Tasmanian tiger. In 2024, researchers said the Tasmanian tiger could be reborn in three years after a breakthrough in genome sequencing.

2. WOOLLY MAMMOTH

They lived between 3,00,000 and 10,000 years ago, during the last ice age. In March 2025, Colossal unveiled "woolly mice" with mammoth-like fur, a genetic breakthrough toward creating next-gen woolly mammoths. The company hopes to have a Woolly Mammoth calf by 2028.

HERE ARE THE STEPS IN RESURRECTING A WOOLLY MAMMOTH

STEP 1: Extract DNA from mammoth bones and fossils.

STEP 2: Sequence multiple mammoth genomes to reconstruct a complete one.

STEP 3: Sequence DNA of Asian elephants, their closest relatives.

STEP 4: Identify key mammoth cold-adaptive genes—shaggy hair, curved tusks, fat deposits, dome-shaped skulls and haemoglobin.

STEP 5: Use gene-editing tools to insert mammoth traits into elephant DNA.

STEP 6: Implant the edited embryo into an Asian or African elephant surrogate.

The calf will be a hybrid, not a true mammoth, but will closely resemble one in appearance.

3. THE DODO

The Dodo, extinct since the 17th century, had its genome assembled by Colossal in 2022. Using the Nicobar pigeon, the Dodo's nearest living relative, scientists will isolate primordial germ cells (PGCs) and apply gene-editing techniques to align its DNA with that of the Sodo. The edited PGCs will be introduced into Nicobar pigeon embryos, resulting in birds that possess both Nicobar pigeon and Dodo DNA.

THE WHAT ABOUTS OF COLOSSAL

- Dallas-based Colossal Biosciences claims to be the world's first de-extinction company.
- Founded in Sept 2021 by software entrepreneur Ben Lamm and geneticist-serial biotech entrepreneur George Church.
- Started with $10 million.
- Now valued at $10 billion.
- Agenda: To de-extinct previously species as it claims that "one-half of all species could become extinct by 2050".

Playing God: Activists warn against gene-editing

Activists and scientists have raised red flags regarding ethical, ecological and practical concerns over the de-extinction by Colossal Biosciences.

1. Authenticity of de-extinction: Activist claim that the animals produced through gene editing are not true representations of their extinct counterparts. For instance, Colossal's "dire wolves" are genetically modified gray wolves, not the original species.

2. Animal welfare concerns: Genetic modifications may result in health issues for the modified animals.

3. Ecological risks: Reintroducing genetically modified species could disrupt ecosystems, affect food chains, and lead to invasive species problems.

4. Diversion of conservation resources: The big financial and scientific resources allocated to de-extinction projects might divert attention and funding from conserving endangered species.

5. Ethical questions: De-extinction raises profound ethical issues, such as whether humans should intervene in this manner and the potential consequences of "playing God."

RESEARCH: AMINA AFAQ; DESIGN: G. VISHWANATHA

US tariffs may shrink global trade by 3%: UN economist

Nations such as Mexico to shift exports to India and Brazil

UNITED NATIONS, 12 APRIL

Global trade could shrink by three per cent and exports could see a shift from markets such as US and China to India, Canada and Brazil due to tariffs imposed by US, a top UN economist has said.

US President Donald Trump unveiled a massive tariff plan last week. The White House later announced a 90-day pause on "reciprocal tariffs" for most countries except China, which in turn decided to impose 125 per cent tariffs on US imports.

"Global trade could shrink by three per cent, with significant long-term shifts in trade patterns and economic integration," International Trade Centre Executive Director Pamela Coke-Hamilton said in Geneva on Friday.

"For example, exports from Mexico—which have been highly impacted—are shifting from markets such as US, China, Europe and even other Latin American countries, with modest gains instead in Canada and Brazil, and to a lesser extent, India," she said.

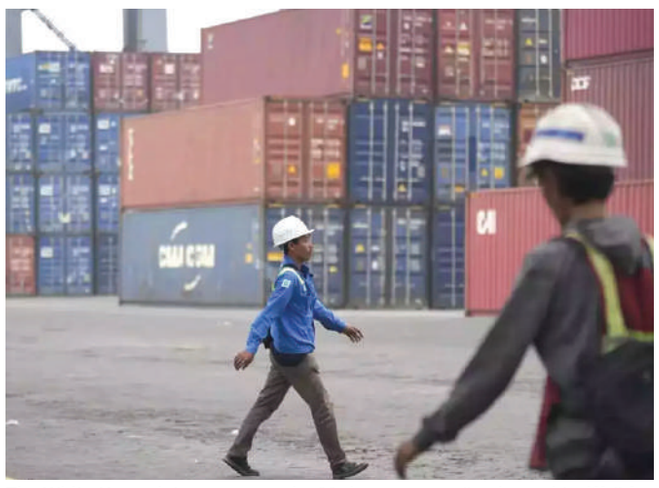
Similarly, Vietnamese exports are redirecting away from US, Mexico and China, while increasing substantially towards Middle East and North Africa markets, EU, Korea and others, she said.

Citing the example of apparel, Coke-Hamilton said that textiles is a top industry in terms of economic activity and employment for developing countries.

In this context, she said that Bangladesh, the world's second-largest apparel exporter, would face a reciprocal tariff of 37 per cent, should it come into effect, which could lead to a loss of USD 3.3 billion in annual exports to the US by 2029.

She added that a key part of the solution for developing countries to navigate any global shocks—be it a pandemic, climate disaster or sudden changes in policies—lies in prioritising three areas -diversification, value addition and regional integration.

Countries like Mexico, China and Thailand—but also countries in Southern Africa—are among the most affected, alongside US itself. —*PTI*



The White House later announced a 90-day pause on "reciprocal tariffs" for most countries except China **PHOTO: X**

Trade pact between India-US to be finalised in 90 days

An interim trade agreement between India and the US could be finalised during the 90-day tariff pause announced by the Trump administration if it is "win-win" for both sides, an official said on Friday. The official said the two countries have already finalised terms of reference to start negotiations for the pact. India and US are engaged in finalising the trade agreement. Both sides have targeted to conclude the first phase by fall (September-October) this year with an aim to more than double the bilateral trade to USD 500 billion by 2030 from about USD 191 billion, A lot of negotiations will happen through video conferencing and there could be physical visits. —*PTI*

TRANSACTION FAILURES

UPI faces third outage in less than a fortnight

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Unified Payments Interface (UPI) users across the country experienced transaction failures on Saturday as the popular payment system was down due to a technical glitch.

This is the third time in less than a fortnight that UPI witnessed outages impacting transactions. In the recent past, UPI outage was reported on 26 March and 2 April.

According to the outage tracking platform Downdetector, a platform that monitors service disruptions based on user reports, complaints about UPI failures were being received after 11.30am. UPI is an instant payment system developed and managed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), an Reserve Bank of India (RBI)-regulated entity. NPCI acknowledged that users are facing partial transaction decline and it is working to resolve the issue.

UPI is built over the Immediate Payment Service infrastructure and allows you to instantly transfer money between two bank accounts.

The payment interface provides a transfer facility without any user charge. Users can transfer any amount of money at any time without incurring additional fees from NPCI.

It is also widely used for small payments at local shops, as there is no minimum transaction limit. Additionally, UPI offers a convenient AutoPay feature, which allows users to set up recurring payments for bills and subscriptions, making transactions seamless and hassle-free. It is to be noted that transactions through UPI touched a record high of Rs 24.77 lakh crore in March, recording a growth of 12.7 per cent over the preceding month. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Indian Overseas Bank reduces repo rate by 25bps

CHENNAI, 12 APRIL

Public sector Indian Overseas Bank has reduced the Repo Linked Lending Rate of the bank by 25 basis points with immediate effect, the bank said on Saturday.The decision to slash the rates by the apex bank comes amid looming uncertainties after last week's announcement of 27 per cent tariffs on Indian imports to the US by President Donald Trump. Asset Liability Management Committee in its meeting held on 11 April has decided to pass on the rate cut to the customers by reducing the Repo Linked Lending Rate of the Bank by 25 basis points from 9.10 per cent to 8.85 per cent with effect from 12 April, 2025, the city-headquartered bank said in a press release on Saturday. —*PTI*

RBI asks applicants to use PRAVAAH from 1 May

MUMBAI, 12 APRIL

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday asked all applicants, including Regulated Entities (REs), to use the PRAVAAH platform for submitting applications for regulatory authorisations, licences, and approvals with effect from 1 May, 2025. In a statement, RBI said it is committed to achieving end-to-end digitization of all internal workflows involved in regulatory approval processes to enhance efficiency, transparency, and timeliness in service delivery. It had launched PRAVAAH (Platform for Regulatory Application, Validation And Authorisation) portal on 28 May, 2024, to streamline online applications for regulatory authorisations, licenses, and approvals ensuring seamless, secure and faster delivery of services in a transparent manner. Applications for which a specific form is not available can be submitted using the general-purpose form, it said. —*PTI*

Sobha Q4 pre-sales rise 22% to ₹1,836 Cr

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Realty firm Sobha Ltd's sales bookings rose 22 per cent to Rs 1,835.7 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 2025, on better housing demand. Its sales bookings or pre-sales stood at Rs 1,504 crore in the year-ago period. According to a regulatory filing, Sobha's sales bookings fell to Rs 6,276.5 crore in the last fiscal compared to Rs 6,644.1 crore in 2023-24. Sobha sold 4.68 million square feet last fiscal at an average price of Rs 13,412 per square feet. Bengaluru contributed 58 and Gurgaon 19.9 per cent to its total sales bookings during the last 2024-25 fiscal. Sobha said, last fiscal, launched eight projects across four cities. Bengaluru-based Sobha is one of the leading real estate developers in the country —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

7 Indian cities see 4-8% rise in office rent

NEW DELHI, APRIL 12

Among seven Indian cities, Mumbai saw an increase of 6.7 per cent in monthly average office rent to USD 1.6 per square feet. Delhi saw an 8.2 per cent rise in monthly rentals to USD 0.9 per square feet, while Bengaluru witnessed a 4.7 per cent rise to USD 1.1 per square feet. Pune stood at USD 1 per square feet in 2024, up 4.5 per cent annually. In Chennai, the monthly office rent stood at 0.8 per square feet in 2024, a rise of 7.7 per cent annually. Hyderabad saw an appreciation of 4.4 per cent in average monthly office rent during 2024 to USD 0.8 per square feet. The average monthly office rent in Kolkata increased 3.8 per cent annually during 2024 to USD 0.6 per square feet, the Vestian data showed —*PTI*

Forex reserves rise for 5th week in a row to $676B

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

India's foreign exchange reserves rose USD 10.872 billion to USD 676.26 billion in the week that ended on 4 April, extending gains for the fifth straight week, official data released by RBI showed.

Barring the latest jump, forex reserves had slumped for about four months, recently hitting an 11-month low. Then followed the latest rollercoaster movement, with gains some weeks and declines the next. The forex reserves started falling after touching an all-time high of USD 704.89 billion in September.

They are now lower from their peak. The decline in reserves was most likely due to RBI intervention, aimed at preventing a sharp depreciation of the Rupee. The Indian Rupee is now at or near its all-time low against the US dollar.

The latest RBI data showed that India's foreign currency assets (FCA), the largest component of forex reserves, stood at USD 574.08 billion. The gold reserves currently amount to USD 79.360 billion, according to RBI data.

Estimates suggest that India's foreign exchange reserves are sufficient to cover approximately 10-11 months of projected imports.

In 2024, the reserves rose by a little over USD 20 billion. Foreign exchange reserves, or FX reserves, are assets held by a nation's central bank or monetary authority, primarily in reserve currencies. —*PTI*

Taxpayers will no longer be able to edit form GSTR-3B

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

The GST Network (GSTN) has announced that from April 2025, GST taxpayers will no longer be allowed to edit the table detailing inter-state supplies to unregistered individuals and composition taxpayers in monthly tax payment form GSTR-3B.

In an advisory, GSTN, which oversees the technical infrastructure for Goods and Services Tax, stated that inter-state supplies automatically populated in Table 3.2 of GSTR-3B will become non-editable.

Taxpayers will now be required to file GSTR-3B using only the auto-generated values.

Table 3.2 captures inter-state supplies made to unregistered persons, composition taxpayers, and holders of Unique Identification Numbers (UIN). —*PTI*

A SUBDUED QUARTER

Rising uncertainties to impact India's IT sector growth in FY26

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Rising macroeconomic uncertainties will impact the growth of information and technology (IT) companies in the FY26, Nomura said in its latest report.

The report says that the large-cap IT companies will have a subdued quarter, with all companies likely posting a sequential drop in revenues.

"Rising macro uncertainty to weigh on growth in financial year 2026 forecast (FY26F)," the report added.

The report points out that the financial year 2025 forecast (FY25F) was a year of growth recovery for most Indian IT companies.

This recovery was supported by a partial rebound in discretionary spending, particularly within the financial services vertical.However, rising macroeconomic uncertainty--driven in part by concerns around US tariffs--is expected to weigh on client decision-making and potentially moderate the pace of revenue growth improvement in FY26F.

The first half of the fiscal year typically plays a critical role in shaping the growth trajectory, and Indian IT companies are likely to begin FY26F with a soft Q1, influenced by a series of recent macro events.

The report adds that Accenture's recent results suggest an improvement in revenue growth in FY26F compared to FY25, with its organic growth guidance implying a 400 basis point year-over-year increase.

However, the company has also cautioned that heightened macro uncertainty could lead clients to adopt a more conservative stance on IT spending. —*ANI*

Auto industry to hit $145 B by 2030: NITI

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

India's leading policy think tank, NITI Aayog, has announced an ambitious vision for the automotive sector, projecting production of automotive components to reach USD 145 billion by 2030, with exports anticipated to triple from USD 20 billion to USD 60 billion.

The report, titled "Automotive Industry: Powering India's Participation in Global Value Chains", provides a thorough analysis of the sector, highlighting both opportunities and challenges.

The report outlines strategic fiscal and non-fiscal interventions designed to enhance India's competitiveness in the global automotive market. Fiscal measures include operational expenditure support, skill development, R&D initiatives, and cluster development.

Non-fiscal strategies advocate for adopting Industry 4.0 technologies, fostering international collaborations, and simplifying regulatory processes.

As the fourth-largest global automobile producer, India produced nearly 6 million vehicles in 2023.

However, the country holds a modest share of around three per cent in the global automotive component trade, valued at approximately USD 20 billion. —*ANI*

Semiconductor demand to hit $108B by 2030

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

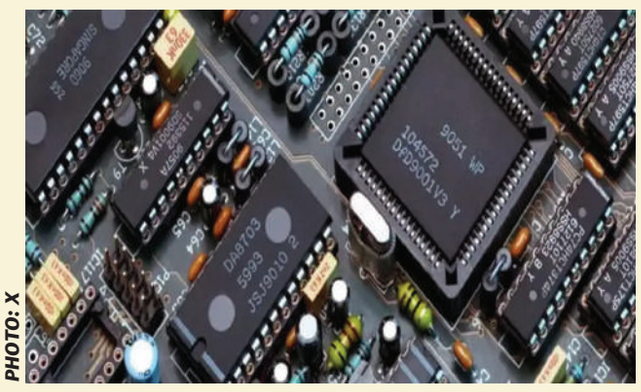


PHOTO: X

- The Indian semiconductor industry is poised for remarkable growth, with end-demand revenues expected to double from USD 54 billion in 2025 to USD 108 billion by 2030, according to a report by financial services firm UBS

The Indian semiconductor industry is poised for remarkable growth, with end-demand revenues expected to double from USD 54 billion in 2025 to USD 108 billion by 2030, according to a report by financial services firm UBS. The report highlights a promising 15 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) for the sector during this period, outpacing global semiconductor market forecasts.

UBS projects that localization opportunities will contribute approximately USD 13 billion in revenues by 2030. This rapid expansion is attributed to India's favourable demographics driving strong electronics demand, increasing enterprise adoption of advanced semiconductors, and supportive government policies. Currently, India represents only 0.1 percent of global wafer capacity and 6.5 percent of semiconductor end-demand.

The report notes that major technology firms are reconsidering their supply chains amid ongoing tariff uncertainties, with several adopting a "China plus one" strategy to diversify manufacturing locations. While China remains the dominant player in tech production, India boasts a significant talent pool, housing about 20 percent of global chip designers for multinational corporations.

Despite challenges, India is emerging as a solid player in the global semiconductor landscape, set to enhance its significance further in the coming years —*ANI*

AMID US TARIFFS ON CHINA

In a 1st, Apple to start making iPhones in US

SAN FRANCISCO, 12 APRIL

President Donald Trump's administration has been predicting its barrage of tariffs targeting China will push Apple into manufacturing the iPhone in US for the first time.

But that's an unlikely scenario even with US tariffs now standing at 145 per cent on products made in China — the country where Apple has manufactured most of its iPhones since the first model hit the market 18 years ago.

The disincentives for Apple shifting its production domestically include a complex supply chain that it began building in China during the 1990s. It would take several years and cost billions of dollars to build new plants in the US, and then confront Apple with economic forces that could triple the price of an iPhone, threatening to torpedo sales of its marquee product.

"The concept of making iPhones in the US is a non-starter," asserted Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives, reflecting a widely held view in the investment community that tracks Apple's every move. He estimated that the current USD 1,000 price tag for an iPhone made in China, or India, would soar to more than USD 3,000 if production shifted to the US And he believes that moving production domestically likely couldn't be done until, at the earliest, 2028. "Price points would move so dramatically, it's hard to comprehend."

Apple didn't respond to a request for comment Wednesday —*PTI*

- President Donald Trump's administration has been predicting its barrage of tariffs targeting China will push Apple into manufacturing the iPhone in US for the first time.

HAL denies finalising consultancy firm for R&D

BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

The Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) on Saturday clarified that it has not finalised any consultancy firm to benchmark its Research and Development (R&D) processes.

The clarification comes in response to some social media posts claiming that it has selected Price waterhouseCoopers (PwC) for the task.

"A few posts on social media (X) have falsely stated that HAL has finalised the selection of a consultancy firm, PwC to benchmark its R&D activities," the HAL said in a statement.

According to HAL, it had issued a Request for Quotation (RF for engaging a consultancy firm to conduct a benchmarking study of its R&D framework against global Aerospace and Defence companies.

The decision to initiate this benchmarking exercise was taken based on the recommendations made by the high power committee on Public Undertakings as part of HAL's continuous improvement and modernization efforts.

Reiterating that no official award of work has been made so far and any information suggesting otherwise is premature and incorrect. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Glenn Phillips ruled out of IPL due to injury

AHMEDABAD, 12 APRIL

Gujarat Titans all-rounder Glenn Phillips has been ruled out of the remainder of the Indian Premier League due to a groin injury, the franchise announced on Saturday. The Kiwi all-rounder, who has returned home, "sustained a groin injury during the IPL contest against Sunrisers Hyderabad on April 6," the Titans said in a statement. While Phillips has not been part of GT's playing XI all season, he was on as a substitute fielder in the game against SRH. The injury occurred in the final over of the powerplay during SRH's innings.—*PTI*

Man City comeback in 5-2 win over Palace in PL

LONDON, 12 APRIL

Kevin De Bruyne sparked Manchester City's remarkable fightback from two goals down in a 5-2 win over Crystal Palace in the Premier League on Saturday that re-ignited his team's Champions League qualification hopes.The 33-year-old De curled a free kick in off the post to begin the comeback in the 33rd minute and had a hand in goals by Omar and Mateo in the first half. James added a fourth, off a pass from goalkeeper Ederson, who later came off injured, before fellow academy product Nico wrapped up the win.It was a display showing the enduring quality of De, who announced last week he would be leaving City at the end of the season after 10 years at the club.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Nick Taylor finally made a major cut again at Masters

AUGUSTA, 12 APRIL

Nick Taylor finally cut another major. Brooks Koepka missed the weekend at the Masters in agonizing fashion. Then there was Bernhard Langer and Fred Couples, two former Masters champions, who took their attempts at cutting to the 18th hole Friday. The 67-year-old Langer missed a par putt that would have gotten him into the weekend, while the 65-year-old Couples made bogey when he needed birdie on the par-4 finishing hole. They certainly weren't alone in their tournament ending early. Koepka, a five-time major winner, was in good shape with two to play. —*PTI*

McLaren shows speed in final practice

DUBAI, 12 APRIL

Formula One pacesetters McLaren dominated final Bahrain Grand Prix practice on Saturday with Oscar Piastri showing impressive speed in leading Lando Norris one-two, while Red Bull's reigning champion Max Verstappen was only eighth.Australian Piastri lapped the Sakhir circuit in a best time of one minute 31.646 seconds, with championship leader Norris 0.668 seconds slower. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc ended up third, but a hefty 0.834 off Piastri's pace, after losing his left wing mirror earlier in the session."I can't believe how fast those McLarens are at the moment," said Alpine's Pierre Gasly, who at one point was top.—*PTI*

Fiery 50's from Pooran, Marsh set up LSG's comfortable win

Markram was the aggressor in his partnership with Pant

LUCKNOW, 12 APRIL

Nicholas Pooran's power-hitting and Aiden Markram's calm demeanour shaped Lucknow Super Giants' comfortable six-wicket win over Gujarat Giants in an IPL match here on Saturday.

Pooran (61 off 34) and Markram (58 off 31) shared 58 runs off 29 balls for the second wicket to set the tone for the 181-run chase, which they managed in 19.3 overs.

Earlier, skipper Shubman Gill and Sai Sudharsan struck quick-fire half-centuries during their 120-run opening stand before LSG pulled things back brilliantly to restrict GT to 180 for six.

Sudharsan (56 off 37) struck his fourth fifty of the season and created a platform for a massive total with Gill (60 off 38), but the home team bowlers made a valiant comeback, picking up three quick wickets to put the brakes on the scoring rate.

The visitors could manage just 60 in the last eight overs after raising the best opening wicket partnership of the season.Chasing the target, in Mitchell Marsh's absence, who is sitting out of the match because of his daughter's illness, home skipper Rishabh Pant (21 off 18) opened the innings.Even after getting a reprieve from wicket-keeper Jos Buttler off Mohammed Siraj in the third over, Pant's (21 off 18) struggle continued as he departed while looking for a huge hit off Prasidh Krishna (2/26), caught by Washington Sundar at third man.But before LSG had got a flying start, scoring 61 runs in the powerplay.Markram was the aggressor in his partnership with Pant as he clobbered a Krishan short ball outside the leg-stump well over deep mid-wicket.

Lucknow Super Giants' Nicholas Pooran plays a shot during the Indian Premier League 2025 T20 cricket match between LSG vs GT *PHOTO: PTI*

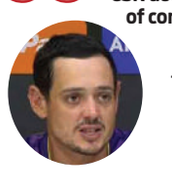
Markram departed in search of another big hit, caught by Gill of Prasidh in the 12th over.

Brief Scores:

Gujarat Titans: 180 for 6 in 20 overs (Shubman Gill 60, Sai Sudharsan 56, Sherfane Rutherford 22; Shardul Thakur 2/34, Ravi Bishnoi 2/36, Avesh Khan 1/32, Digvesh Rathi 1/30).

Lucknow Super Giants: 186 for 4 in 19.3 overs (Aiden Markram 58, Rishabh Pant 21, Nicholas Pooran 61, Ayush Badoni 28 not out; Prasidh Krishna 2/26). —*PTI*

> **Chennai Super Kings down on confidence, playing with a very conservative approach**
>
>
>
> -Michael Clarke, former Australia captain

> **KKR opted for an extra spinner against CSK due to knowledge of conditions**
>
> 
>
> -Quinton de Kock, Kolkata Knight Riders batter

> **CSK have got the right players, not putting the white flag up just yet**
>
>
>
> -Michael Hussey, Chennai Super Kings batting coach

RCB VS RR

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	32
RCB Won:	15
RR Won:	14
NO RESULT	3

RCB vs RR Match starts at **3.30 pm IST**

Salt-Kohli brace for Archer Test as RR, RCB eye win

JAIPUR, 12 APRIL

Openers Phil Salt and Virat Kohli will brace for a fiery showdown against thunderbolts from express pacer Jofra Archer as Rajasthan Royals and Royal Challengers Bengaluru look to get back to winning ways in the IPL here on Sunday.

Both teams are heading into the contest smarting from defeats.

While RCB lost to Delhi Capitals by six wickets, RR was blown away by Gujarat Titans in a 58-run drubbing.

RCB, with three wins from five matches, is placed in the top half of the table at fourth, while RR, winless in as many games, is languishing at number seven.

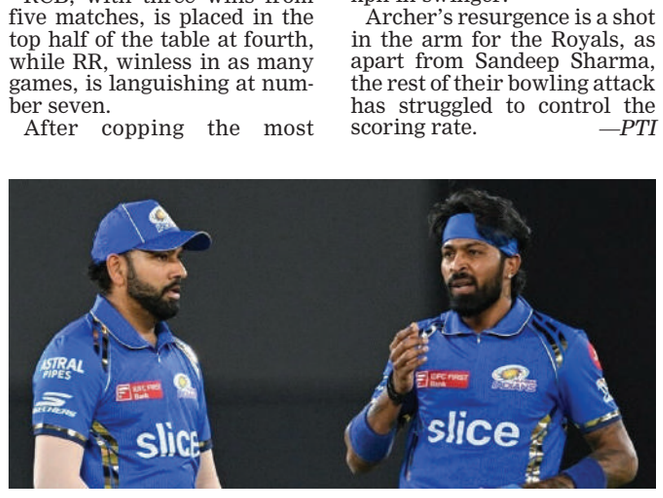
After copping the most expensive spell in IPL history on the opening night, British pacer Archer has managed to turn things around.

Relentlessly bowling over 144 kph, the England speedster had batters gasping before knocking them over.

He delivered a match-defining spell of 3/25 against Punjab Kings, lighting up the game by shattering in-form batter Shreyas Iyer's stumps with a 148.6 kph thunderbolt.

He cranked it up to 152.3 kph against Gujarat Titans earlier this week, and sent back skipper Shubman Gill with a 147.7 kph in-swinger.

Archer's resurgence is a shot in the arm for the Royals, as apart from Sandeep Sharma, the rest of their bowling attack has struggled to control the scoring rate. —*PTI*



DC VS MI

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	35
DC Won:	16
MI Won:	19

DC vs MI Match starts at **7.30 pm IST**

DC VS MI: ROHIT FACES SPIN TEST, RAHUL UP FOR BUMRAH CHALLENGE

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

An out-of-sorts Rohit Sharma will strive to keep himself relevant going forward in the Indian Premier League (IPL) when he is challenged by Delhi Capitals' effective troika of spinners in Mumbai Indians' next clash here on Sunday.

As Rohit is fighting for form, MI will bank on their lethal weapon, Jasprit Bumrah, to deliver and ask some probing questions to KL Rahul, easily the opposition's best batter on view, and other batters.

Delhi Capitals, the team to watch out for during the first quarter, will start as the favourite in this game. The hosts are eyeing their fifth consecutive win while MI, under lone warrior Hardik Pandya, would want to avoid the ignominy of five defeats in six games.

In IPL, just one defeat can make or break momentum, and Mumbai Indians are on the cusp of having another nightmarish season after finishing at the bottom of the table in the last edition.

Kuldeep, who former Australian skipper Michael Clarke termed as the best bowler in the tournament so far, has finished his quota in all games, taking 8 wickets at a brilliant economy rate of less than six runs per over.

However, against MI, the Capitals skipper might once again open the bowling against Rohit, who doesn't enjoy a match-up against left-arm spinners or wrist spinners. —*PTI*

PANKAJ ADVANI WINS SILVER MEDAL IN WBL C'SHIP

NEW DELHI, 12 APRIL

Pankaj Advani, India's most decorated cueist, settled for a silver medal after a narrow defeat against David Causier in the final of the WBL World Matchplay Billiards Championship here.

In a best-of-15 contest, where fortunes swung from one side to another, Advani started with a 2-0 lead, but his opponent clawed his way back in the summit clash played at Carlow, Ireland.

Both the players fought intensely but the Briton clinched the decider to win the game 8-7 (19-100, 0-100, 100-47, 100-52, 19-100, 100-0, 49-100, 100-3, 34-100, 4-100, 100-85, 31-100, 100-53, 100-43, 100-28).

Advani will now look to defend his IBSF World Billiards title, which he has been winning since 2016, from Sunday here. —*PTI*

INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE

Bagan clinch ISL crown, defeat Bengaluru FC 2-1

BENGALURU, 12 APRIL

Mohun Bagan have defeated Bengaluru FC 2-1 in the final to clinch the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024/25 crown.

Bengaluru FC took the lead in regulation time after an own goal by MBSG defender Alberto Rodriguez, but equalised from the penalty spot thanks to Jamie Cummings.

In extra time, Australian forward Jamie MacLaren scored the winner in the 96th minute. The victory caps off a dominant season for Mohun Bagan, as they win both the ISL Shield and the ISL crown

Mohun Bagan Super Giant defeated Bengaluru FC in extra time of the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 final at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata on Saturday.

With this victory, the Mariners won the ISL trophy and also clinched the domestic double, having already bagged the ISL League Shield by finishing at the top of the league table at the end of the regular season. —*PTI*

Mohun Bagan's forward jason Cummings celebrates after scoring against Bengaluru FC *PHOTO: ISL*

CARLOS ALCARAZ ADVANCES TO MONTE CARLO FINAL

PARIS, 12 APRIL

Carlos Alcaraz battled through a scrappy match to reach the final of the Monte Carlo Masters, defeating Alejandro Davidovich Fokina 7-6(2), 6-4. The match was far from pretty, with both players committing numerous unforced errors, but Alcaraz proved to have the necessary weapons to close out the win, securing his place in his first-ever Monte Carlo final.

Davidovich Fokina, who has yet to win an ATP tour-level title, fought hard but struggled with consistency. He had a chance to capitalize on a strong first set after fighting back from a 3-5 deficit, breaking Alcaraz and holding serve to level the set at 5-all. However, he faltered in the tiebreak, making too many errors while Alcaraz tightened up his game. —*PTI*

ICC may agree to changes in point system in WTC cycle

LONDON, 12 APRIL

The International Cricket Council could agree to major changes in the points system of the World Test Championships from the next cycle, while it is likely to defer the contentious proposal to segregate Test cricket into two divisions during its meetings in Zimbabwe over the weekend, a report in the Guardian said on Saturday.

The governing body for the sport has been long contemplating a new system of bonus points based on the margin of victory — "similar to that used in rugby union, while weighting points for wins based on the strength of opponents and adding extra points for winning away from home" — and it could be a big point of discussion during a series of meetings.

The next World Test Championship (WTC) cycle begins with India touring England for a five-match series in June this year, five days after the conclusion of the final for the 2023-2025 cycle between South Africa and Australia at Lord's.

The current WTC system awards the same number of points — 12 for a win, six for a tie and four for a draw — which has given rise to discontent that India, England and Australia — the Big Three in cricket — "are disadvantaged as they play more games against each other". —*PTI*

AC Milan canter to victory over struggling Udinese

UDINE, 12 APRIL

Two goals right before halftime put visiting AC Milan on its way to a comfortable 4-0 win over Udinese in Serie A and extended the home side's losing streak to four matches.

Udinese is on its worst run since the end of the 2022-23 season, when it also lost four in a row. It remains in 11th place.

The win left Milan in ninth, one point behind Fiorentina, but it will worry about an injury to goalkeeper Mike Maignan, who was taken off on a stretcher after colliding with teammate Alex Jiménez.

Rafael Leao's superb strike from 18 meters was quickly followed by Strahinja Pavlovic's glancing header from a corner on the stroke of halftime.

Udinese was forced to chase the game in the second half, and Milan took advantage of gaps that opened up.

Theo Hernández added a third in the 74th minute when he started a sweeping move in his half and finished it off with an unstoppable shot. —*PTI*

Rafael Leao

EXPANDED FIFA TOURNAMENTS

Some teams will break new ground: Infantino

KUALA LUMPUR, 12 APRIL

FIFA president Gianni Infantino praised the impact of expanded tournaments in the development of soccer around the world in a video message to the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Congress on Saturday.

Some teams will break new ground in reaching that competition as a result, not only of the move to 48 teams with eight or even nine Asian teams now being able to qualify, but also a product of the tireless work being done by you all, added Infantino

Speaking from the United States, host of this year's Club World Cup, which will feature 32 teams in June and July instead of the previous seven, Infantino addressed the 46 member associations gathered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino speaks to the media at a welcoming event for the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup tournament *PHOTO: X*

"Opportunities to face opponents from different continents don't come along too often and that is something that we have been trying to change at FIFA," said Infantino, who has pushed for bigger and new tournaments since taking his position in 2016 in a bid to generate more revenue for the organization's 211 member associations.

Asia will have four representatives at the Club World Cup: Al-Ain of the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal, Ulsan Hyundai of South Korea, and Japan's Urawa Reds.

"In total, players from more nations will represent their respective countries at this tournament than at all of the FIFA World Cups combined since 1930," added Infantino. —*PTI*